

“Ghosts Within Us”: A Study of Women Writers of Gothic Modernism

By

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Thesis submitted

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2019

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my first supervisor, Dr Andrew Humphries, for his unfailing help and support throughout this project. His hard work, patience, enthusiasm, guidance and encouragement are what have made this project possible. I would also like to thank my second supervisor Prof. Carolyn Oulton for her support, unstinting encouragement, and continued belief in my project.

My thanks also go to all my family, friends and colleagues who have supported me in this project and who patiently have listened to my endless talks about the Gothic.

Finally, I would like to extend my thanks to the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research for their funding that enabled me carry out this research in Modernist and Gothic literature.

Abstract

This thesis offers a reading of Modernist narratives by British women writers through Gothic lens. The ostensible archaic mode of the Gothic that Modernism endeavoured to throw away returns from the repressed to haunt Modernist fiction. Women writers that this thesis examines, show the importance of this writing mode. Through its elastic elements, the Gothic continues to live in the early twentieth century. This thesis shows how women writers adapt Gothic tropes to engage with their own and their age's anxieties between *the fin de siècle* and the 1930s.

This study shows how the Gothic communicates historical and gender concerns from women's perspective with the aim to establish a women's voice within the field of Gothic Modernism. The Gothic, in the works of Vernon Lee, E. Nesbit, May Sinclair, Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, Daphne du Maurier and Jean Rhys, evolves and responds. This means that the Gothic transforms from *the fin de siècle* to become more psychological in later works of these writers from the 1910s to the inter-war period. In other words, the Gothic evolves as it responds to the varying anxieties, affecting women across these periods.

This thesis aims to add a unified study of Modernist women writers to the field of Gothic Modernism. By unified, I mean that this study produces a sense of the continuity to the Gothic. It highlights the Gothic's revival in the 1890s and its subsequent re-invention in the Modernist period at the hands of Modernist women writers.

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Chapter One: From Haunted Castles to Haunted Subjectivities: Women Modernist Writers and the Revision of the Gothic.

Gothic and Modernism have a complex relationship to each other which remains difficult to account for (Smith and Wallace 3). This complexity grows out of the opposing concepts of both fields, for the classical Gothic elements of ghouls, vampires and ghosts seem to oppose Modernism's project of rationalism and reason. This thesis shows that despite its attempt to break with the past that includes the Gothic, Modernism and women's Modernist fiction particularly, ends up adapting it as its cornerstone with the Gothic becoming an important backbone of its literary experimentation.

When Virginia Woolf states in her essay "Edith Birkhead's *The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic Romance*" (1921) that "It is at the ghosts within us that we shudder" (305), she alludes to new sensibilities of the Gothic mode which emerge at the heart of women's Modernism and function as a narrative feature. This thesis aims to give a sustained study of women writers' adaptation of the Gothic in literary Modernism. In doing so, Modernist texts under study reveal the way the Gothic departs from its traditional locus of castles to make the individual's subject its main site in Modernism. The female subject particularly becomes a central zone where Modernist ghosts lurk and this is what Woolf means by "the ghosts within us". This thesis will show how Modernism ostensibly disavows the Gothic but in practice reimagines it. This is a vital aspect of women's writing because the women writers that this examines are forced to filter their gendered experience of instability and terror through an indirect lens.

The Gothic that was known to have witnessed a decline in the mid-nineteenth century emerges again in the *fin de siècle* period. It declines again from the Edwardian period, 1910s to the inter-war period, 1930s. Catherine Spooner writes that:

For the intelligentsia of the - early twentieth century, it became fashionable to reject Gothic along with other nineteenth-century baggage. Woolf's date is convenient for our purposes: following the end of the Edwardian period there was a relative dearth of Gothic literature (although in the cinema Gothic narratives thrived) until much later in the century with the revival of interest in popular literary forms in the 1960s (40).

Julian Wolfreys also points out that the Gothic "was given life in 1764 with the publication of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. It died allegedly somewhere around 1818 or 1820, with the publication of, respectively, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer*" (8). The chapters that this thesis examines will show the way Modernist British women writers revive and innovate the Gothic in these periods where it seems to have declined between 1890 and 1940. Their Gothic approach is born from their need to articulate gender issues of their times and react to the upheaval of the First World War. By pursuing a systematic reading of the Gothic in the works of Vernon Lee, E. Nesbit, May Sinclair, Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, Daphne du Maurier and Jean Rhys, this thesis shows how these women writers reform the classical Gothic conventions, that are pointed out earlier in this introduction, to adapt to a new historical era while trying to give a definition to women's shifting but challenging position within the chaos of Modernity from the *fin de siècle* into the inter-war period. In the texts I examine, the Gothic is used to respond to the anxieties of the period as they affect women, and the way in which the Gothic evolves in women's fiction accordingly. This means that the Modernist Gothic arises as a reaction to anxieties such as the rise of the New Woman in the 1890s and specifically the

emergence of new horrors with the outbreak of the First World War (1914-1918). As such I argue that there is a transition from a still more literal sense of Gothic in the *fin de siècle* through the Edwardian period to become a more internalised Gothic during the war period and through its aftermath. I locate this study in the field of Gothic Modernism with the aim to highlight women writers' contribution to the field as a way of showing a continuity of women's perspective across the period between 1890 and 1940 in response to its gender, ideological and national concerns as they influence women's position and experience.

The field of Gothic Modernism is still in its relative infancy. The available scholarship on twentieth century Gothic has mainly focused on strengthening the relationship between these seemingly opposed fields by tracking Gothic traces in Modernist texts. This has also focused on Gothic cinema which was on the rise during the early twentieth century through movies' adaptations of famous Gothic literary figures such as Tod Browning's *Dracula* (1925) and James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931) (Kavka 214). Scholarly works, as such, highlight a range of Modernist writers, examining these writers call upon Gothic manifestations in their works to reflect on a society in chaos during and after the First World War. In exploring the differing aspects of Gothic in their writings, these studies do not do justice to Modernist women writers except some essays on Virginia Woolf, Djuna Barnes and Elizabeth Bowen. Apart from these, very little has been said on other women Modernist writers, who, I will argue, use Gothic tropes that are not straightforwardly detected. This includes May Sinclair, Rebecca West, Daphne du Maurier and Jean Rhys. Thus, it will be essential to examine women writers who share different concerns across the periods that only a Gothic approach can bring together. This thesis addresses this gap by offering a unified examination of Modernist women writers' distinctive use of the Gothic and the way it evolves from the end of the nineteenth century from a more straightforward approach that can be seen in the presence of visible ghosts and

speaking portraitures etc., to becoming more internalised in women's fiction written from the 1890s to the 1930s. By internal I mean that the Gothic becomes more psychological in its manifestations of ghosts that lurk within the individual's psychology.

The first studies of this relationship between Gothic and Modernism include edited collections such as *Gothic Modernisms* edited by Andrew Smith and Jeff Wallace (2001), followed by *Gothic and Modernism: Essay Dark Modernity* edited by John Paul Riquelme and published in 2008, and the most recent Daniel Darvay's *Haunting Modernity* (2016) and Matt Foley's *Haunting Modernisms* (2017) which have taken the response to the genre to new dimensions. Smith and Wallace in their introduction account for the neglected relationship between Gothic and Modernism and draw attention to James Joyce's use of the metaphorical vampiric language and some examples from T.S Eliot to argue that the Gothic arises in Modernist texts as nostalgia and as a remembrance of a cultural mode that has disappeared but which is still desired to address the chaos and lack of meaning in the modern world. Smith and Wallace's study is important as it has paved the way for other related works to emerge in this area that focused upon staging the importance of the Gothic to literary Modernism. My thesis, in this regard, seeks to add to their work by focusing on the development of the Gothic in pre-Modernist and Modernist women's fiction. This focus adds to our understanding of the differing concerns of women writers across the periods, but connected through a Gothic language which in itself is plastic, yet communicates the ambivalence, the terror and the uncertainty that the female characters of their fiction experience, as part of a world becoming more empowering for women as it becomes more isolating and challenging.

Riquelme adds a further dimension to our understanding of the Gothic into Modernism. He considers that twentieth-century Gothic "has regularly brought to the fore the dark side of modernity as a threat to establishing or maintaining the home" (3).

Furthermore, his edited collection of essays, he says, raises questions such as “to what extent has history, as part of the condition of modernity, become Gothic?” (1). This means that the Gothic is birthed in Modernity through a period of history that in itself stirred fear and terror. This is relevant to my argument as it delineates this Gothic history through women’s lenses and the way that they tend to project its impact on their position. So, “the dark side of modernity” from a Modernist woman writer’s perspective means capturing hidden terrors of the female character that reflects the struggle of the modern woman.

In *Haunting Modernity*, Daniel Darvay traces Gothic origins to two centuries before the publishing of Horace Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto* and he argues that eighteenth-century authors such as Walpole tend to distance themselves from the political and religious concerns of the sixteenth century but their Gothic works delineate “their conception of that very life” (5). Darvay tries to make the point that Modernist writers tend to reject the eighteenth-century Gothic only for this to turn out being an essential component of its aesthetics in the same manner eighteenth-century writers reject the concerns of the English reformation of the sixteenth century only to resurface again in their Gothic narratives. Darvay explains that tracing the earlier Gothic that has its origins in the English reformations helps us understand eighteenth-century Gothic and also “helps explain the plasticity of the Gothic, as it continues to adapt to changing conceptions of everyday life in the hands of modernist writers” (5). This is important to my argument because despite Modernism’s attempt to discard the past, the Gothic reappears as a necessary tool for women writers of Modernism to chronicle their experience between the 1890s and the 1930s. In addition, some of the writers examined here such as Daphne du Maurier adapt earlier Gothic conventions of the eighteenth century to draw upon modern sensibilities of women’s experience in the 1930s only to show that women’s status in the 1930s bears

certain commonalities with the eighteenth-century Gothic heroine trapped in a Gothic castle.

Darvay's study is also important to my argument because of the way he examines Woolf's Gothic which is also one of my areas of focus in this thesis. His chapter on Woolf focuses on the sublime as a source of Gothic in Modernist literature. In his examination of *To the Lighthouse* (1927), he argues that through arts the writer is allowed to unmask hidden identities in her characters (140). This is delineated through the character of Lily Briscoe who comes to terms with her hidden identity through her paintings. This hidden identity differs from the prescribed roles of the woman that characterise the previous century. The idea of the unmasking of hidden characters is central to our understanding of Gothic Modernism because my study examines hidden ghostly selves within the individual particularly the female characters of the novels that this study analyses. By ghostly selves, I mean hidden selves that are sheltered within the unconscious of women who are often unaware of their presence. Darvay, however, has explored this point of hidden identities from the perspective of the Gothic sublime only, focusing on the characters of Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. My chapter on Woolf will give a detailed examination of such hidden characters through historical and psychoanalytical approaches that will also cover the female characters from *Mrs. Dalloway* particularly linking the significance of the ghostly to the context of the Great War.

Foley in *Haunting Modernisms*, however, distances himself from connecting his work to Gothic Modernism, arguing that this phrase could be misleading. This is because, he points out, the phrase does not do justice to the appropriations of hauntings in Modernism. Studying the area of haunting Modernism separately, he believes, will give a better understanding to the specific appropriations of the ghostly as well as of the spectral ethics (12). His study covers different Modernist writers and his chapter on Woolf looks at

the anxiety of remembrance that is related to a traumatic past. In doing so, Foley examines the character of Septimus Warren Smith, a war veteran, arguing that his relationship to the apparition of Evans, his dead war comrade, is a psychotic symptom of shell-shock (114). His reading of Woolf, nevertheless, does not cover the impact of the war upon female characters as they come to inhabit the same world of the dead as their men in post-war England. This is to say that the women characters come to live as ghosts of themselves in the post-war world because of the condition of their men. In addition, while my thesis will look also at themes of haunting and the ghostly, my aim is not to categorise Modernist texts as Gothic because they merely encompass Gothic elements. My approach rather tracks the evolving images of the Gothic as this was developed by women writers who necessitated a unique lens to draw upon women's complex position during the Modernist period.

Alexandra Warwick highlights an important critique concerning the complex relationship between Gothic and Modernism. She, hence, questions why literary texts previously described as feminist or Victorian are now labelled as Gothic. She argues that Gothic is rather a mode than a genre. She argues "isn't the task of analysis to ask how a text is working, not what it is?" (7). In this regard, it is essential to clarify that the task of this thesis is not to label Modernist texts as Gothic or classify them in the Gothic genre. I am interested, instead, in the Gothic as a "mode" of writing for Modernist women writers, as they adapt it in response to the period's historical challenges and needs. In other words, the novels analysed here will not be called Gothic novels. They, instead, reimagine the Gothic that proves to be flexible enough to address a number of anxieties experienced by women in different historical contexts from the 1890s to the 1930s. The following section will highlight some key historical concerns that led, it seems, to the resurgence of the Gothic in spite of literary Modernism's claim to discard it.

The women writers that this research examines take us on a journey of Gothic transformation from the 1890s where it witnessed a significant revival to the war and post-war periods where Gothic finds hiding lacunas and where it becomes internal and immaterial. Gothic reform in the twentieth century takes place as a result of the rising anxieties that Britain started to live through and the impact these varying anxieties wrought upon women. National and individual anxieties were beginning to take form in the *fin de siècle*. The emergence of Charles Darwin's theories of evolution had shaken the stability of religious faith. Science and education, as such, were replacing the authority of religion. Added to this is the general concern over the future of a nation threatened from without as well as within. It was threatened by external powers from America and Germany who at the beginning of the twentieth century threatened to overthrow the leading military and economic position of the British Empire. Some political economists in the nineteenth century, such as Thomas Malthus, believed that the population ought to be reduced to achieve better economic status and that excessive over-population could be dangerous. Others, such as Charles Kingsley, had opposing views, as they emphasised the growth of the population as a source for imperial power (Davies 9-10). The authorities, in this light, centred their attention towards mothers as the source of procreation to produce a fitter and healthier population.

There was also a spreading fear over degeneracy. Degeneracy means psychological abnormalities according to Benedict Morel; he is considered the founder of the "degeneration theory" developed in 1857. In the mid-nineteenth century, as scientists were trying to find explanations for mental diseases, Morel considered that degeneration referred to any psychological disease that makes the individual different from the norm; degeneration, he argued, progresses from one generation to the other, and these abnormalities tend to become more severe as they progress along generations (qtd in Smith

1). This theory, during the *fin de siècle*, came to be explained in relation to decadence, which was considered to be prevalent at that time both in society and in literature. Smith, explaining this, refers to Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1892) in which, he states, "provides a way of reading *fin de siècle* decadence which is based on a model of a dangerous, potentially perverse and possibly infectious version of male effeminacy" (3). Decadence became a major concern towards the end of the nineteenth century because of its association with homosexuality. Oscar Wilde was the main figure who stirred this fear because his art was regarded by many as decadent and perverse. For Nordau, Smith argues, "Wilde's art was simply perverse because it was the product of perversity" (14). His art as such was considered dangerous because it portrays the man as effeminate, a case which threatens the future of masculinity. Vernon Lee and Edith Nesbit, who will be the focus of chapter two of this thesis, were publishing at that time and their ghost stories reflect, in a way, these concerns surrounding male effeminacy at the point masculinity was being challenged by the rise of the New Woman trope in the 1890s.

In addition to the degeneration factor, the trope of the New Woman also contributed to the anxieties surrounding English masculinity and the health of the nation in general. Because her rebellious behaviour has been considered as abnormal and even deemed monstrous, the future of the race was seen to be at risk in this view¹. The New Woman is a term that first originated in Sarah Grand's essay "The New Aspect of the Woman" (1894). The term grew to be complex as it lacks a static definition. Sally Ledger contends that the term like its originator "had a multiple identity. She was, variously, a feminist activist, a

¹ See Sally Ledger and Scott McCracken's introduction in *Cultural Politics at the Fin de Siècle* (1995) P5, for more details on the various guises of the New Woman.

social reformer, a popular novelist, a suffragette playwright, a woman poet; she was also often a fictional construct, a discursive response to the activities of the late nineteenth-century women's movement (1). Most importantly is that the New Woman sought alternative spaces to those of the cosy Victorian family. Such national concerns about male effeminacy, I argue, are reflected in women's literary narratives through a Gothic approach in the way that writers like Lee and Nesbit communicate the rise of the New Woman as a ghostly revenant that brings to a crisis the image of a deteriorating masculinity.

The New Woman figure became more active and evident in public spaces and raised fears in the patriarchal authorities that lasted well into the new century. Added to this, a movement called Eugenics was on the rise during the *fin de siècle*. Inspired by the concept of "the survival of the fittest," Eugenics promoted the sterilization of the population with the aim of improving the quality of the human race². The mother was of primary importance for this and major pressure was being put on her as a result, with the emphasis that she needs to learn the skills of motherhood to ensure a better racial health. To improve the quality of masculinities, the mother is the primary target to bear such responsibility. That is to say, if the population is weak or unhealthy, it is the mother who is first blamed, for she has been inadequate in her task of mothering. Anna Davin states that:

² The phrase "survival of the fittest" has its origins in Darwin's *The Origins of Species* (1859) and the phrase was coined by Herbert Spencer in his *Principles of Biology* (1864). In defining it, Spencer says "The survival of the fittest which I have here sought to express in mechanical terms is that which Mr. Darwin has called "natural selection", or the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life" (65).

Because of the declining birthrate, motherhood had to be made to seem desirable; because high infant mortality was explained by maternal inadequacy, the standards of mothers must be improved. A powerful ideology of motherhood emerged in relation to these problems of the early twentieth century, though it was firmly rooted, of course, in nineteenth-century assumptions about women, domesticity, and individualism. Motherhood was to be given new dignity: it was the duty and destiny of women to be the “mothers of the race”. (13)

The advocates of this ideology considered that women’s activity in employment and education meant an ignorance as to their maternal duty which risks the offspring of an ill race. Ledger comments that “Britain’s women urgently needed to raise up a strong British ‘race’ in order to sustain the nation’s (supposed) supremacy, and the New Woman was construed (or constructed) as a threat to this national need” (18). Added to this is the British army’s poor performance in the Boer Wars (1898-1900) which revealed the physical unfitness of its military recruits. This furthered the concerns over the future of the nation, leading the authorities to launch a series of acts in favour of improving the standards of child care. Motherhood, Davin says “was to be made in every way desirable: its status raised, its supremacy acknowledged” (20). The feminist movement and the fight for the vote continued into the new century. Consequently, the number of unmarried women increased, in this period, as women started to be engaged in other activities beyond the home (Buckley 135). The expansion of educational opportunities allowed more unmarried middle-class women to get jobs and entitled them to compete with men. This, Buckley states, is one of the major factors that led to a decline of the sense of family during this period (135-136). As a result, the government released a series of acts between 1903 and

1908 and organised conferences and societies to improve the condition of childcare³. It is important to highlight this political ideology because the literary narratives that were produced in the 1890s to the 1910s mirror, to some degree, the impact these concerns wrought upon female characters. For example, the anxieties over the notion of motherhood as well as the ambivalence about the idea of marriage is expressed through Gothic manifestations of ghostliness in May Sinclair's ghost stories, particularly, that will be examined in chapter three of this thesis.

The outbreak of the First World War (1914-1918) marked the end of the Edwardian Period. Paul K Saint Amour contends that "according to modernism, supernatural premises were no longer the necessary engines of perpetual suspense because history itself was becoming Gothic" (209). Indeed, the Modernist period witnessed a new set of horrors that required Gothic dimensions to articulate the unspeakable reality of the subject matter of war trauma. The experience of the war, in literary narratives, has been mostly focused on conveying men's experience under the pretext of having taken physical part in the war. Women, on the other hand, have been marginalised in this context of communicating war experience. Having themselves had their own share of trauma, women writers tend to develop a Gothic approach that is visible in outlining the psychological cost of the war. The Gothic in the war novels of Woolf and West account for the ambivalent relationship between women and their own power. Predicated on the absence of men, this power is then withdrawn altogether with the reinstatement of gender hierarchies after 1918.

³ This includes the Children Act (1908); voluntary societies include the infant' Health Society (1904), Food Education Society (1908), the Institute of Hygiene (1903) etc.

By the time women were chasing the vote achieved for many for the first time in 1918, and securing places in the workforce, they found themselves drawn back to their archetypal roles through acting as nurses or as carers for the returned soldiers. Women as such, on the Home Front, begin to function as Angels in the house. The Angel in the House – which I will be referring to as *Angel* in this thesis – is the traditional idealistic literary image of the female that was coined by Coventry Patmore in his poem entitled with the same name, published in 1856. It soon became a symbol which patriarchal society of the nineteenth century adopted. Patmore’s poem encourages ideals of the perfect charming housewife, the self-sacrificing goddess of the middle class⁴. The figure of the *Angel* becomes definitive of women’s position at the Home Front⁵. Women in war fiction, in Woolf and West in particular, are trapped at the Home Front in the same manner that female Gothic is trapped in a haunted castle ruled by a male villain. In the twentieth century, the woman is psychologically imprisoned. Therefore, the impact that was brought upon women by this historical event of the Great War is transmitted to the reader by an innovative approach of the Gothic. The device of the ghostly for example comes at the centre of Woolf and West’s war narratives. Although in a different manner to that of the eighteenth century, the ghost is present within the unconscious of the female characters. The fears they exhibit while nurturing the damaged masculinity are indicative also of a dilemma towards

⁴ Nina Auerbach states that during the Victorian era many considered Patmore’s title “a convenient shorthand for the selfless paragon all women were exhorted to be, enveloped in family life and seeking no identity beyond the roles of daughter, wife, and mother. “Angel” and “house” become virtual synonyms” (69)

⁵ Suzan Grayzel explains that the term “home front” entered into common English usage during the First World War, intensifying the identification of the battle or war front as intrinsically masculine and the home front as exclusively feminine” (11)

motherhood. Their acting as “Angels” on the other hand constitutes a sense of duality because of the presence of an alien within them. In other words, this alien within is the ghost of the *Angel* settled in their unconsciousness.

By the end of the First World War (1918), women were granted the vote but only for those aged over thirty. This, however, “did not mark the end of 50 years struggle, it signified the opening of a new chapter, as armed with ‘the power of the vote’ the movement sought to achieve the social, political and economic equality for women” (Law 42). Indeed, after the war, women were asked to abandon their temporary war jobs as munition workers, tram conductors and train guards for example, to return to their familiar place the house as there was major concern about unemployment at that time. The inter-war period in this regard witnessed a significant return of many women to their prescribed roles of wives and mothers. Margaret Kornitzer in this view points out that

During the war a generation of middle-class women acquired the habit of independence in a manless England. This sudden achievement of all that feminists had dreamed for a hundred years was more than society at large had bargained for.

In 1918 women were expected to surrender what they had gained, and to behave as if nothing had happened to themselves or to the world in the previous four years. (24)

The feminist movement waned after the war causing a split in its pre-war organisations such as the NUSEC (National Union of Societies for Equal Citizenship). The conflict within the feminist movement was particularly caused by a disagreement over the notion of motherhood. Tension grew between old feminists who considered that motherhood and marriage were a threat to their struggle for equality and new feminists who believed that motherhood was the primary solution to restore the population that war had destroyed. A split in the NUSEC took place in 1927 as a result of such conflict between old feminists and new feminists (Soloway 291). Women’s fears in the inter-war period emanate from the

sense of dilemma within women that this conflict has created, because as Kornitzer points out women came out of the war era with a sense of achievement after having tasted independence in “a manless England” (24). Women’s experience within the house that they had returned to after the war is marked by fear and dilemma. These historical developments occur in women’s literary Modernism through Gothic lenses. The latter is invited to speak for the incommunicable experience of the war through women’s vision of it. Literary war narratives examined in this thesis reflect the experience of the group of women who stayed in the house. The female characters as such are equally haunted by the war experience as their menfolk. The home front in this regard turns to be a site of horror to its female residents. Having witnessed their men and sons return, to some degree, in a damaged state, these women characters find themselves in the lead, taking the responsibility to restore their men’s manhood into order. The dilemma that they face lurks in this liminal position that they undertake. Confused between preserving their leading position in the house that has been previously ruled by the patriarchal male figure, and sacrificing it, these women characters echo the sense of ambivalence haunting many women at the home front.

The Gothic in women’s Modernism is invited to channel these historical concerns and the impact they generate. It is, therefore, important to draw some attention to some critical context of women’s Gothic in order to see how it continues to serve women writers in the early twentieth century. There has been an ongoing interest about women writers in Gothic since the eighteenth century because the Gothic helps to evince women’s repressed desires. This has been addressed under the label of Female Gothic which critics of Gothic studies have adopted as an umbrella term for all that concerns the Gothic heroine. First coined by Ellen Moers, the term encompasses “the works that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic” (Moers 90). She also points out that women writers make use of claustrophobic elements of the Gothic

to epitomise women's life of imprisonment which is exemplified in Ann Radcliffe's works. Radcliffe is considered as the wellspring of women's Gothic genre. In other words, she feminized the genre that came into being by a male writer Horace Walpole. Her heroines manifest the plight of female domesticity. Radcliffe, through her canonical Gothic novels, contributed to our understanding of women's experience in the period of the eighteenth century. Moers insists that the Female Gothic term "is not easily defined except that it has to do with fear" (90); contending that the power of the Gothic can be best seen in the works of Radcliffe whose works centre around a persecuted damsel who portrays a sense of courage (91). Critics, such as Anne Williams, Andrew Smith and Diana Wallace consider the female Gothic as a form of a coded expression that allows women writers to criticise patriarchal society⁶. According to them, the term refers to the revolutionary woman. Wallace also offers an examination of the Female Gothic metaphors. She elaborates on Mary R. Beard's haunting idea "it is the image of woman throughout long ages of the past as a being always and everywhere subject to male man or as a ghostly creature too shadowy to be even that real" (qtd in Wallace 26). Further, Wallace elaborates on the idea that Gothic can be a metaphorical power. The ghost being a Gothic trope acts as a symbol of "civil dead" for women within marriage. Moreover, she continues to concede that this metaphor continues to function in twentieth-century women writings such as Virginia Woolf, Hannah Gavron, Adrienne Rich, Luce Irigaray, and others who moved from expressing women's repression within marriage to delineating varying forms of women's repressed self in a more general sense. While the interest of my thesis is not discussing the Female Gothic

⁶ See Anne Williams's chapter on "The Female Plot of Gothic Fiction" in her book *Art of Darkness A Poetic of Gothic* (1995), Pp. (135-140) for further details.

trope, its thematic concerns of female entrapment that this term appeals to are analogous, to some extent, with the heroines' experience in literary Modernism.

Significantly, the dominant message that the earlier Gothic romances by women writers aimed to deliver was to address women's suffering from patriarchal institutions of their time. Eugenia Delamotte states that

Women's Gothic shows women suffering from institutions they feel to be profoundly alien to them and their concerns. And those institutions were all too contemporaneous with the lives of the women who wrote and read Gothic literature in the 1790s and early 1800s: the patriarchal family, the patriarchal marriage, and a patriarchal class, legal, educational, and economic system. (152)

Added to this, the theme of entrapment in Gothic romances, Delamotte argues, speaks for the domestic entrapment that the institution of marriage spurs. To this end, relying on the dark castle as a site of horror, Gothic romances tend to centre their lenses on women's homelessness within their failed home (Ellis ix). Women's writings in the early twentieth century continue to express such concerns of entrapment and homelessness to some degree. Women of the early twentieth century also experience homelessness at the heart of the home. This means that the home that women return to after the Great War is defined by estrangement and fear in Modernist narratives.

To understand women's Gothic in literary Modernism better, it is essential to see where it has come from. In other words, it is significant to see the form of Gothic that literary Modernism attempted to throw away in order to understand Gothic's metamorphosis in literary Modernism. Kelly Hurley, in this respect, summarises the classical elements of the Gothic in the following passage in which she states that the earlier Gothic

has been quite variously defined in terms of plot (which features stock characters, like the virtuous, imperilled young heroine, and stock events, like her imprisonment by and flight from the demonic yet compelling villain), setting (the gloomy castle; labyrinthine underground spaces; the torture chambers of the Inquisition), theme (the genre's preoccupation with such taboo topics as incest, sexual perversion, insanity, and violence; its depictions of extreme emotional states, like rage, terror, and vengeance)... (191)

Some of these conventions can indeed be seen in the passage below which I selected from Horace Walpole's novel *Castle of Otranto* (1764). This novel is agreed to be the first Gothic novel that paved the way for the Gothic genre to emerge. The novel marks what is to be known as Gothic stock features. The story opens with a supernatural scene where a giant helmet falls from the sky and crushes king Manfred's only son Conrad to death on his day of marriage with Isabella. Manfred, king of the castle of Otranto, commits himself to marry Isabella so she could offer him an heir. It is at this point of the novel where the Gothic conventions begin to take clearer shape. When she hears of Manfred's will of marrying her, Isabella attempts to flee the castle through its secret passages which conjure an atmosphere of darkness and horror:

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which, grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. Every murmur struck her with new terror, yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her. She trod as softly as impatience would give her leave, yet frequently stopped and listened to hear if she was followed. In one

of those moments she thought she heard a sigh. She shuddered and recoiled a few paces. In a moment she thought she heard the step of some person. (*Otranto* 25)

This passage shows one of the familiar conventions of the classical Gothic as indicated by Hurley in her categorization of its traditional motifs. This mainly revolves around the theme of the heroine portrayed in flight from the villain lord of the castle. The physicality of such elements of mysterious sounds, for example, that seem to follow Isabella in a forsaken place of the castle is absent in the Modernist fiction that this thesis examines. What the heroine of Modernism escapes from is the sounds in her mind. These sounds are the product of the presence of ghostly figures which are symptoms of the woman's complex status in a time that her older sister the New Woman sought to make of a better world. Audrone Raškauskienė argues:

The labyrinthine and claustrophobic space associated with Gothic architecture has been the defining convention of Gothic fiction since Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). This space is usually represented by a castle, a monastery, or a prison (often in ruins). This architectural space is integral to the psychological machinations of Gothic fiction, and is used to invoke feelings of fear, awe, entrapment and helplessness in characters and readers alike. (50)

The symbolism of the Gothic castle of Walpole's *Otranto*, as it reflects the entrapped psychologies, continues to be adapted in the twentieth century. Modernist women writers depict "the psychological machinations" of their female characters who reflect the vivid experience of women of their time which does not seem to be different from the experience of the female Gothic in a haunted castle. Modernist texts here feature a form of a haunted castle that is not straightforwardly Gothic but one which is saturated with feelings of "fear, awe, entrapment and helplessness" in its characters and perhaps readers as well.

The modern heroine, in this sense, is pursued by ghostly memories from the past, by the circumstances of her present time as well as by spectres from the bleak future ahead. Although both heroines – the eighteenth-century Gothic heroine and the modern heroine – shudder at different events, these two heroines happen to share the same degree of horror. Hurley agrees that it becomes more complex to define Gothic in later years and locates what she calls “Modernist Gothic” in the *fin de siècle* period (191). She focuses on the phenomenon of the abhuman and “derangement of human subjectivity” as what characterizes the Modernist Gothic. While this is true, my study will extend the Modernist Gothic to cover the later period of 1910 to the 1914 and the 1940. In addition to this, the Modernist Gothic I examine here is a feminine one that underlines discomforting subjectivities of the female characters that are affected by the differing events across the periods stated above. Therefore, other dimensions of this Modernist Gothic will be highlighted.

The sort of entrapment that women of the Modernist period experience is different to that of the Gothic Romances. This means that it is the entrapment of the subject that comes to replace the physical entrapment. Women, as such, are confined by the ambivalence in regard to their hidden desires. This includes the ambivalence concerning maternalism and marriage. In addition, as women are exposed to the public space, a sensation of fear of the unknown becomes their companion when strolling city streets. Women writers from the *fin de siècle* to the inter-war period extract the Gothic from its haunted castles to take a psychological root dictated by the plasticity of its elements of ghostliness such as metaphorical vampirism and urban spectrality. Julian Wolfreys on this account states: “exorcised from its haunted houses, the spectral-gothic takes on its most *unheimlich* aspects” (7). These “*unheimlich* aspects” are a recurrent theme in Modernist novels by

women writers and they specifically revolve around “*unheimlich*” subjectivities of the characters⁷.

The Gothic, as John Paul Riquelme puts it, finds “hiding places” in Modernist literature (4). “Hiding places” suggests that the Gothic becomes connected to the internal, given that literary Modernism is concerned by the workings of the mind (Childs 8). The Gothic at issue here, as Childs indicates, becomes extracted from its original birthplace as a concrete phenomenon to reside within the mind. The Gothic can be said to have made the unconscious its repository by the end of the nineteenth century coinciding at this point with Freud’s discovery of the unconscious. In fact, the Gothic has always been interested in psychology but the emergence of psychoanalysis in the 1890s broadens its fiction and narrative scope and also offers new lenses for the criticism of literary Modernism. Maria Beville in this sense points out:

The Gothic would take on a more intense psychoanalytical tone and delve even further into the dark corners of self-knowledge. The seemingly deviant concepts of sexual desire, instinct, aggression and hysteria have been key themes in the Gothic since it first emerged in the eighteenth century. However, with the beginning of the twentieth century, came new approaches to analysing such concepts and the nature of their relationship to the personal, interpersonal and intersubjective sense of self.

(62)

⁷ Freud explains that “the nearest semantic equivalents in English” to the German word *unheimlich* are “‘uncanny’ and ‘eerie’, but which etymologically corresponds to ‘unhomely’ [...] as the language has developed, or we can assemble whatever it is about persons and things, sense impressions, experiences and situations, that evoke in us a sense of the uncanny, and then go on to infer its hidden nature from what all these have in common” (“Uncanny” 124).

Following Beville here, Freud's essay the "Uncanny" (1919) is often cited in this regard. As a matter of fact, the resurgence of Gothic in Modernism can be conceived of in "uncanny" terms. In Adam Phillips's book edition of the "The uncanny", Freud explains that the uncanny "is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar" ("Uncanny" 120). As the return of the repressed, the Gothic has been repressed by Modernism's project of "make it new", adopting the famous phrase from Ezra Pound⁸. The Gothic is old, yet familiar in the way that it appears to be compatible with the Modernist concerns despite its classical association with irrationality. Woolf in her review of "Henry James's Ghost stories", for instance, mocks the eighteenth-century Gothic saying that eighteenth-century Gothic fictions "only make us laugh" and that today "we breakfast upon a richer feast of horror" (288). By horror, Woolf perhaps suggests that the post-war world tells a new tale of horror due to the disillusionment that the atrocities of the Great War wrought upon the individual and collective consciousness. By critiquing the classical Gothic Romance, Woolf disperses it in the same manner in which Modernism throws off the old⁹. Because the repressed returns to make the invisible visible, the Gothic in the same sense returns to reveal the hidden that literary Modernism's new techniques, such as the stream of consciousness, struggle to unravel. Riquelme contends that

⁸ Ezra Pound's phrase of "make it new" comes as a title of his book *Make it New* published in 1934 and it soon became a slogan for Modernist scholars.

⁹ Jean-Michel Rabaté argues that "the return of the past is too often overlooked because the declaration of the 'new' is taken at face value. If indeed the main thrust of high modernism—as launched by Yeats, Hulme, Wyndham Lewis, Pound, and Eliot in the frantic London years just before World War I—has been to link the wish to 'make it new with an awareness of the primitive nature of ritual,' then their modernity can no more escape the return of the repressed than pre-empt its unforeseeable effects." (4)

[T]he essentially anti-realistic character of Gothic writing from the beginning creates in advance a compatibility with modernist writing. That compatibility begins to take a visible, merged form in the 1890s in Britain. In the development of the Gothic after the French Revolution, the characteristics and issues apparent in Gothic writing of the eighteenth century carry forward into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but they are significantly transformed. (4)

The Gothic at issue here is that which speaks for the emerging horrors of Modernity including fear of newness, insecurity, uncertainty in particular and the destabilization of the new Modernist world in general, as they affect women. These anxieties vary according to the historical events as well as political ideologies taking place from the *fin de siècle* to the 1930s. What my chapters aim to show is that it is only through a Gothic mode that these differing events are brought together. Women's literary Modernism recognizes the growing interest between Gothic and historical events. This argument forms the central focus of each chapter in this thesis.

Chapter two examines the way the emerging figure of the New Woman whose policies of sexual excess and the non-domestic space of spectrality that she occupies threatens the notion of family life and also threatens the continuity of a healthy race for the British Empire. Analysing supernatural short stories from Vernon Lee and Edith Nesbit, the chapter will explore the way in which these writers employ the Gothic in terms of female ghostly revenants that represent the New Woman, spreading anxieties and evoking fear in her male counterparts. The Male characters, in Lee for instance, are portrayed in a weak position and usually live in threat caused by the ghost revenant of the female. This is to show that the spreading fear over the future of English manhood is emblematic of the rise of the New Woman.

Sinclair takes over where Lee and Nesbit leave off by transforming these Gothic elements to become more psychological which is immediately evident in her borrowing of Freud's term the "uncanny" for her collection of *Uncanny Stories* (1923). This is a collection of ghost stories that bear feminine concerns as they touch upon the complex position of women in what concerns marriage and motherhood during the Edwardian period. Chapter three, then, captures the ambivalence of marriage and motherhood that the New Woman of the previous decade has triggered, and that the modern woman of the early twentieth century has come to endure. The modern woman's experience, I argue, is reflected in Sinclair's female characters who are haunted by the notions of motherhood and, also, psychologically trapped in marriage. This chapter ends with a section on Sinclair's Gothic in her war fictions. The Gothic in the latter differs from the one in the *Uncanny Stories* in that it becomes internalised. Despite its internality, the Gothic through its metaphorical language of vampirism, allows for a vivid image of the usurpation of women's power from the wounded man at the battle Front.

Chapter four discusses further the usurpation of power from the woman because of the atrocities of the Great War. This chapter is an extension to Sinclair's chapter in the way that it examines this usurpation of women's power as experienced from within the house. Discussing two canonical works of war fiction, Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1918), the Gothic language unravels the alien within the female characters. Unaware of its presence, they experience fear and ambivalence. The alien within takes the shape of the *Angel* which, I argue, is revived because of a national need for its contribution in restoring the pre-war sense of family and home.

Chapter five gives vivid images of the horrors of domesticity in the inter-war period given that post-war England witnessed a required return of many women to re-take their

traditional roles. Discussing two works of Daphne du Maurier, *Jamaica Inn* (1936) and *Rebecca* (1938), this chapter seeks to explore the psychological battle that the inter-war woman has to endure within the patriarchal house of the 1930s. The house in du Maurier's novels is akin to the Gothic house of earlier Gothic Romances. This occurs in her borrowing of a traditional Gothic setting that rather bears modern undercurrents of women's journey towards emancipation. Her heroines are accompanied by psychological ghosts from the past in their journey that lead them in the end to evade the house and take on a life of liminality outside its conventions.

Chapter six gives further examination of this life of liminality but in a more modern, thus, urban setting of the 1930s. Liminality, Victor Turner maintains, "is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon" (95). It refers to that state of transience inhabited by the individual. In Jean Rhys's novels *Quartet* (1921), *Good Morning Midnight* (1939), and *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie* (1931), liminality refers to spaces of boarding houses, hotels, streets and cafés between Paris and London. These metropolitan spaces, this chapter argues, conjure threat and menace to the female *flâneur*. The female *flâneur* as such undertakes a status of a living ghost that turns out to be rather protective although short-lived.

In her essay "Modern Fiction" (1919), Woolf says that in Modernism "the point of interest, lies very likely in the dark places of psychology" (162). This dissertation explores the "dark places of psychology" of women who are affected by the different historical aspects taking place from the 1890s to the 1930s. It will argue that despite Modernism's attempt to turn away from the escapist genre of the Gothic, women writers revive, and evolve it to address different historical and psychological needs of the period from a changing female perspective. To explain, the aggressive female vampire in Lee is seen in a position of power that is significant to the threat constituted by the challenging figure of

the New Woman. As the period progresses to the 1910, the character of the woman of the previous decade faces more challenges that place her back in the house, hence, partially loses her power. This is exacerbated by the event of the First World War in the 1914 where women encounter new horrors. Ambivalent to their new role that the war has triggered, these women begin to show signs of a deranged subjectivity in the sense that they are haunted by an outside intruder embodied in the ghost of the *Angel*. After the war, these women end up living as liminal figures in the 1930s. The liminal figures found in the old Gothic are characterized as monsters or vampires and they are known to evoke fear because of their ambiguous status of the liminal. As such, women characters in this period come to embrace this position of liminality whose unknowability arouses further anxieties and concerns within the patriarchal society.

Chapter Two: “I think I am haunted”: The Revenant New Woman and Troubled Masculinities of the *fin de siècle*

The Gothic as a mode of writing had witnessed a substantial resurgence by the end of the nineteenth century with leading figures such as Bram Stoker and Robert Louis Stevenson with their publishing of the canonical Gothic works *Dracula* (1897) and the *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). This chapter focuses on women writers’ revival of the Gothic as a writing mode during the *fin de siècle*. Vernon Lee and Edith Nesbit adapt the Gothic to communicate anxieties of their time. Their Gothic also anticipates a new writing mode that grows into an essential element for Modernist women writers publishing between the 1910s and the 1930s. With this in mind, this chapter aims to highlight the emerging figure of the New Woman whose policies of sexual transgression and seeking non-domestic space as her new shelter come to threaten the notion of the cosy Victorian family house, hence, disturb the patriarchal boundaries.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first one will examine two short stories from Lee’s collection *Haunting* (1890) that will show the way she uses the supernatural to tackle gender issues. It, specifically, highlights women’s assertion of power through their ghostly nature that at the same time brings to surface the crisis of masculinity apparent in her male characters. The second section will give further examination to the condition of the man as he confronts the unfamiliar figure of the New Woman in spectral form as well as other associated challenges of Modernity such as rapid technological progress. This will be fulfilled by looking at two short stories of E. Nesbit from her series of *Grim Tales* (1893) that are “Man Size in Marble” (1893) and “the Violet Car” that was published later in 1910.

The Gothic found in Lee's short stories manifests itself through the medieval setting because she sets her events mostly in the Renaissance period. Focusing specifically on the ghost story, Lee develops a psychological Gothic that relies on the subject as its main site of horror. This horror originates from the haunting effect of the female ghost revenants on the male subject. Lee's adaptation of the Gothic, however, remains paradoxical in that there is a remarkable adaptation of the traditional Gothic that is inherent in its tangible elements such as visible female ghosts and speaking portraits¹⁰. At the same time, she draws upon the mental status of her male characters under the impact of the empowered female ghost revenant. This theme anticipates the emergence of a psychological Gothic. In her preface of her collection of supernatural tales under the title of *Haunting*, Lee says:

That is the thing – the Past ... that is the place to get our ghosts from ... my four little tales are of no genuine ghosts in the scientific sense; they tell of no hauntings such as could be attributed by the [recently formed] Society for Psychical Research ... My ghosts are what you call spurious ghosts (according to me the only genuine ones), of whom I can affirm only one thing, that they haunted certain brains, and have haunted, among others, my own and my friends. (39-40)

The Society of Psychical Research was founded in 1882. The society's primary aim was to investigate and find scientific proofs for the existence of certain phenomena such as

¹⁰ The element of the haunting portraiture can be spotted in the first Gothic novel *Castle of Otranto* (1764) where the ghost of the rightful owner of the castle emerges from a portrait hanging on the wall; the ghost comes out of the frame and threatens the inhabitants of the castle: "The spectre marched sedately, but dejected, to the end of the gallery, and turned into a chamber on the right hand. Manfred accompanied him a little distance, full of anxiety and horror, but resolved. As he would have entered the chamber, the door was clapped-to with violence by an invisible hand" (*Otranto* 24). This device continued to be adapted by his followers such as Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis and later on by Oscar Wilde in the 1890s.

ghost hauntings, spiritualism, telepathy, etc. Lee makes it clear in this passage that her ghosts stem from the imagination and that they have nothing to do with the sort of ghosts that the SPR investigates. Her ghosts, she states, are “spurious” which means fake ghosts. Hilary Grimes argues, in this view, that Lee seems to be unsure of what she means by the term ghost as there is a contradiction between what she says in this passage and her actual adaptation of the ghost figure in her short stories. Grimes points out: “Lee wants her ghosts to be false, fictional, and imaginary, but she also wants them to be tangible” (125). Indeed, her ghosts fall between materiality and immateriality. They are material because they are visible to the individual. The immateriality of her ghosts on the other hand lies in their act of haunting which means that these ghosts escape materialisation through locating themselves within the psyche of the individual. It is this transition that marks the shift of the Gothic from its literal meaning to become internalised in the *fin de siècle*. Esther Peeren clarifies the meaning of literal ghosts as follows:

Literal ghosts may be defined as the dead reappearing in some sort of perceptible form to the living. Calling this type of ghost ‘literal’ does not imply a belief that such reappearances actually occur; it merely indicates that this meaning of the word is generally accepted as the most common or straightforward one, forming the basis for any figurative usage (3)

Significantly, Lee’s female ghosts are considered tangible in the way that they are perceptible to the living male characters. At the same time, her literal ghosts tend to form the basis, as Peeren argues, for a more internal ghostliness to emanate. We can add to this, the setting of her stories which resembles Gothic Romances in that there is always an apparent empathy with these in her events where she obtains her ghosts from. She questions, in her essay “In Praise of Old Houses” (1897), “So why should the past be charming? Perhaps merely because of its being the one free place for our imagination” (39).

Her focus on history and the way she extracts her ghost female characters from the Renaissance period means that the past offers her a safe space to address feminine concerns of her time. It is essential to note, nevertheless, that Lee showed a pacifist stance concerning the woman question of the end of the nineteenth century. Indeed, she admitted in her essay “Economic Dependence of Women” (1902) that “I must begin by confessing that the question which goes by that name had never attracted my attention, or, rather, that I had on every occasion evaded and avoided it” (71). However, the fact that her female characters in “Amour Dure” and “Oke of Okehurst”, masquerade as sixteenth-century ghostly entities, tells us otherwise. This is to say that her female characters, seemingly anachronistic, turn out to share major characteristics with the *fin de siècle*’s infamous figure of the New Woman.

To begin with “Amour Dure”, the story is told through diary entries of a young historian called Spiridion Trepka, who in a research trip to Urbania, an Italian town, gradually becomes obsessed and later on haunted by a historical portrait of Medea Da Carpi, an aristocratic woman from the Renaissance period. This woman called Medea is famous for her fatal beauty; she makes use of her attractions to seize control of the city of Urbania as no man seemed to be able to escape her charms. She is involved in different love affairs and murders and finally executed by the said rightful ruler of the city of Urbania, Duke Robert, in 1585. Having read the chronicles of Medea’s history written by male writers of the Renaissance period, Trepka initially sympathizes with Duke Robert, the executor of Medea, believing the devilish nature of Medea as described by the writers. Upon finding Medea’s portrait in the town’s historical archive, Trepka changes his view as he eventually becomes obsessed with her beauty and starts to find excuses for her deeds. Very overwhelmed by her beauty, he justifies her act of murder as necessary for her to survive. Upon her return from the dead, Trepka follows Medea’s instructions that lead to

his dismay as she asks him to liberate her from the Duke's curse so that she can be revived. After doing that, Trepka meets the same fate as her previous victims as he is discovered dead by the end of the story.

Diana Wallace notes in her essay "Uncanny Stories: The Ghost Story as Female Gothic" that the ghost story is important to women writers in that as a form it "allowed them special kinds of freedom, not merely to include the fantastic and the supernatural, but also to offer critiques of male power and sexuality which are more radical than those in more realist genres" (57). This is relevant to Lee for her obvious use of the motif of the female ghost revenant which is linkable to the New Woman in many ways. The trope allows her a freedom to address the woman question in relation to the New Woman's journey of emancipation as it has also allowed her to shed light on the effeminate man of the 1890s which I will return to later in this chapter. The New Woman, Lynn Pickett says, is "a representation" (137); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg defines it as "a condensed symbol of disorder and rebellion" (247) and Sally Ledger affirms that

The New Woman of the *fin de siècle* had a multiple identity. She was, variously, a feminist activist, a social reformer, a popular novelist, a suffragette playwright, a woman poet; she was also often a fictional construct, a discursive response to the activities of the late nineteenth-century women's movement. (1)

Seen as such, Medea is a "fictional construct" that functions as a "representation" of the rebellious woman of the 1890s. Lee sets her story between the nineteenth and the sixteenth

centuries¹¹. This does not prevent one from arguing that the characteristics of Medea fit with nineteenth-century concerns of the New Woman who is an “activist” and “a social reformer”. Medea’s activism lies in her rebellious stance against the existing order of family and home. She, indeed, tends to violate the boundaries of marriage which is prevalent in her series of murders of her several husbands and lovers before she was herself executed. As depicted in the manuscript that Trepka discovers in the archive, she had been organizing a series of murdering crimes from the age of fourteen. She has stabbed her would-be husband and married Orsini Duke of Stimigliano only to arrange his death two years later. At the age of nineteen, Medea married the Duke of Urbania after she had coerced him to kill his wife and marry her. The Duke of Urbania meets the same fate as her previous lovers and dies after he has handed over his Duchy to Medea’s son the Duke of Orsini. Subsequently, together with her son, she takes control of Urbania’s local government until she is chased by rebel forces from her husband’s brother Duke Robert who had imprisoned her. This brings her ultimate death at the hands of female infanticides—killers of children—chosen as executioners out of Duke Robert’s fear that her sexual threat would prevent men from killing her. Believing that no natural human could murder her, Robert “insisted that only women—two infanticides to whom he remitted their sentence—should be employed for the deed.” (“Amour” 95). The Duke’s way of dismantling her threat shows the extent of her dangerous sexuality to men.

¹¹ Medea is a figure in Greek mythology. This figure is the archetypal example of the “barbarian woman”; she is a sorceress who gets involved in subsequent crimes which include killing her children to punish her husband for his betrayal (Maxwell and Pulham 58). Tracy Olverson also suggests that the compound effects of Lee’s artistic and historical allusions make of the mythic Medea an “integral element to the narrative of ‘Amour Dure’” (158).

Medea's threatening sexuality is further remarked by Trepka who has been on a hunt for her portraiture: "I have for some time been hunting for portraits of the Duchess Medea. Most of them, I imagine, must have been destroyed, perhaps by Duke Robert II.'s fear lest even after her death this terrible beauty should play him a trick". ("Amour" 96). Having finally found one, he describes her in the following words:

Cleopatra seems to me, for all her Oriental dress, and although she wears a black wig, to be meant for Medea da Carpi; she is kneeling, baring her breast for the victor to strike, but in reality to captivate him, and he turns away with an awkward gesture of loathing [...]. Tight eyelids and tight lips give a strange refinement, and, at the same time, an air of mystery, a somewhat sinister seductiveness; they seem to take, but not to give. The mouth, with a kind of childish pout, looks as if it could bite or suck like a leech. ("Amour" 96-97)

Her oriental dress suggests a shift from the conventional codes of the Victorian dress such as corsets. Also, Medea's revealed breast with the intention to "captivate" the man permits a link with 1890s male anxieties over women's transgression of the established codes of sexuality as they sought sexual liberation outside the conventions of marriage. In line with this, and in another scene, Trepka describes Medea as a "tigress" that "fastens her strong claws into her victim" ("Amour" 101). This statement indicates the danger that Medea as a New Woman brings to the Victorian society. The term "claws" has a symbolic significance in that it associates her with the monstrous feminine, evoking an anxiety over her predatory sexuality. The phrase "monstrous-feminine" is coined by Barbara Creed in her study of female monsters in horror cinema that can also be applicable to literary texts. In listing the figures of the female monster, Creed says:

The witch, of course, is a familiar female monster; she is invariably represented as an old, ugly crone who is capable of monstrous acts. During the European witch trials

of recent history she was accused of the most hideous crimes: cannibalism, murder, castration of male victims, and the advent of natural disasters such as storms, fires and the plague. Most societies also have myths about the female vampire, a creature and the plague. Most societies also have myths about the female vampire, a creature who sucks the blood of helpless, often willing, victims and transforms them into her own kind. (2)

Likewise, the historical character of Medea has the reputation of a “witch”. For example, Trepka hears one of the boys of the village of Urbania as he responds to Trepka’s cries of “Evviva, Medea!” (“Amour” 110) with “She is a witch! She must be burned!” (“Amour” 110). In addition, Duke Robert “would have enjoyed having her burned as a witch (“Amour” 103). In a way, the monstrous picture of Medea here can be said to reflect the end of the 1890s fear of the New Woman who is also deemed as deviant and monstrous because she deviates from what is socially accepted. The New Woman figure is also said to threaten the future of the race because of her seemingly abnormal nature. Among the attacks that the New Woman received were that she was “a threat to the human race, was probably an infanticidal mother and at the very least sexually ‘abnormal’” (Ledger 10). The Gothic here figures through its motif of the monstrous that gestures towards the patriarchal society’s fear of women’s defiance of the established private/public dichotomy of the 1890s. This female empowerment is regarded as a monstrous act that has to be curtailed.

Another aspect of Medea’s monstrous femininity is her vampire-like behaviour. As such, Trepka’s allusion to her mouth that looks as though it could “bite” evokes a vampiric connotation: “The mouth with a kind of childish pout, looks as if it could bite or suck like a leech” (“Amour” 97). Indeed, it has been brought to the attention of some critics that Lee in fact reworked the aesthetic Gothic of Walter Pater who, in describing Mona Lisa’s fascinating beauty, borrows some vampiric elements which invoke a sense of terror within

the viewer. In Pater's words, "She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave" (99). Medea's vampiric attributes occur in her immortal nature. Stith Thompson defines the vampire as a "corpse which comes from the grave at night and sucks blood" (424). Significantly, despite her execution, Medea returns to sustain her power. The image of the blood sucking has a symbolic significance with Medea's way of usurping power through her alluring sexuality¹².

These monstrous faces of Medea as a vampire and a witch raise questions regarding the source of fear that renders her a terrifying figure. Creed, in her analysis of the monstrous feminine, justifies the terrifying nature of the female in the way that it has its roots in gender difference. She supports her argument with Freud's theory that the man's fear stems from the castrated body of the female¹³. The monstrous, according to Neale, Creed explains, is produced by the male fear of castration (5). In this respect, the fear of the woman's sexual

¹² The vampiric allure of Medea resonates with some famous vampire characters like the three voluptuous vampires of Stoker's *Dracula*. These vampires are an icon of the New Woman that violates the Victorian sexual borders. They are described as having aggressive behaviour and voluptuous threatening beauty. Imprisoned in the castle of Dracula, Jonathan Harker describes these vampires as possessing a fatal beauty that overcomes him with deadly fear (*Dracula* 39-40).

¹³ Freud's theory of castration occurs in his essay "Medusa's Head" (1922). Medusa is a monstrous figure in Greek Mythology. She was characterized by the writhing serpents on her head in place of hair. She is described as a terrifying female because the sight of her turns men into stone (Creed 2). Freud, in his essay, connects the horror of the sight of Medusa to the horror produced by the sight of female genitals: "If Medusa's head takes the place of a representation of the female genitals, or rather if it isolates their horrifying effects from their pleasure-giving ones, it may be recalled that displaying the genitals, or rather if it isolates their horrifying effects from their pleasure-giving ones, it may be recalled that displaying the genitals is familiar in other connections as an apotropaic act. What arouses oneself will produce the same effect upon the enemy against whom one is seeking to defend oneself. We read in Rabelais of how the Devil took flight when the woman showed him her vulva" (247). This connection helps Freud address his point of the anxiety of castration within the male viewer.

freedom during the 1890s casts women as monstrous and terrifying. Scott Brewster argues, in this regard, that throughout the nineteenth century

ghosts and monsters are now treated as effects of mental aberration, delusion, and delirium. Yet precisely at the moment reason casts ghosts out of the material world and relocates them in the recesses of the mind, the rational subject becomes prey to the uncanny, the unseen, and often unfathomable machinations of the psyche. (483).

This explains Trepka's mental state that begins to destabilise because of the haunting of Medea's ghost revenant. The term "revenant" is coined by Derrida in his *Spectres of Marx* (1993) where he states that it is "a common term for ghost or specter, the *revenant* is literally that which comes back" (224). An example of this occurs in one of his diary entries where Trepka thinks: "I can't free myself from the thought of this Medea da Carpi. In my walks, my mornings in the Archives, my solitary evenings, I catch myself thinking over the woman" ("Amour" 100). Gradually, Trepka's romantic fantasies turn to terror and anxiety as the figure of Medea begins to materialise through the portrait. Patriacia Pullham points out that Lee's portrait tales feature "dangerous, androgynous women who escape that frame, who refuse to be constrained" (138). The ghostly materialisation of Medea from the portrait can, indeed, be regarded as the character's way of refusing to be trapped within its frame. This appeals to the *fin de siècle* woman who rebels against domestic entrapment. Medea is also revived through some letters that Trepka finds in the archive. These letters belong to Medea and her executor Duke Robert. The letters of Duke Robert reveal how scared he was of Medea in the way that "he feared her as something almost supernatural" ("Amour" 103) and he even "tells his correspondent of his fear of meeting the soul of Medea after his own death" ("Amour" 103). To prevent his encounter with her soul in the afterlife, Robert had the image of his soul fastened into his effigy and "as long as the image of his soul was attached to the image of his body, he should sleep awaiting the Day of his

Judgement, fully convinced that Medea's soul will then be properly tarred and feathered, while his— honest man!—will fly straight to Paradise.” (“Amour” 104)

The fear that the Duke demonstrates can be said to reflect the fear of male effeminacy which was of major concern in the 1890s. Masculinity was being regarded in terms of empire and nation. Its failure would mean a failure of both empire and nation. Smith explains this through the theory of degeneration which comes to elucidate “popular anxieties about national decline” (14). Masculinity in this period, he adds, was becoming synonymous with empire. This concern over the position of masculinity was particularly triggered by the feminist movement under the label of the New Woman in the 1890s (2). Indeed, Medea echoes the feminist political movement. Her conquest of empire, in a way, reflects women's movement of the end of the nineteenth century¹⁴. Tracy Olverson, in this regard, notes that her “faculty of waging war recalls the increasing militancy of the contemporary journalism and commentary” (164). This occurs in Trepka's description of her as he continues to rationalise her murderous acts: “Yes; I can understand Medea. Fancy a woman of superlative beauty, of the highest courage and calmness, a woman of many resources, of genius [...] a woman whose one passion is conquest and empire – fancy her” (“Amour” 101). Medea's conquest in this story is symbolic of the politics of the New

¹⁴ Lee's “Amour Dure” shares thematic concerns that are found in H.Rider Haggard's Gothic novel *She* (1887) for example as the latter delineates the anxieties of the male over the emergent threat of the New Woman to his power and authority. This is also found in Charlotte Perkin Gilman's 1892's Gothic short story “The Yellow Wallpaper” which scrutinises contemporary fantasies of female power and leadership accompanied by the male's dystopian fear.

Woman. For example, her quest of seizing the reins of the government of Urbania symbolises women's quest of having a political voice in the *fin de siècle*¹⁵.

The male characters of this story, like the Duke and Trepka, appear to be affected by Medea. Here Lee appears to echo the patriarchal society's fear of the New Woman. Julia Kristeva's theory of "abjection" that comes in her essay *Powers of Horror*, published in 1982, helps us understand the haunting force caused by the ghost of Medea.

The new scientific and psychological theories that developed at the *fin de siècle* led to a wide interest in studying the human mind, particularly the unsettled subject which generates it. It is permissible to use Kristeva's theory of "abjection" in this story despite the fact that Lee's ghost stories were published before the emergence of psychological theories. The theory, however, helps our understanding of haunted masculinities by the New Woman that metaphorically comes from the dead in different guises. As such, the Duke's fear of Medea is symptomatic of the presence of something "other" within him. Linda Dryden comments that *fin de siècle*'s fictions "encode an anxiety about 'otherness', about the possibility of a dual self, where the externally moral individual masks a primitive 'other' within that threatens to engulf the civilized" (10-11). Her remark is relevant to the ghost short story of this period and "Amour Dure" reveals encoded anxieties about "otherness" within her male characters. This otherness can be referred to as "abject". The abject is what one rejects and "almost violently excludes from oneself" (McAfee 46).

¹⁵ Gail Cunningham comments on the feminist movement: "In 1870 the suffrage Bill was definitely blocked, and the death of John Stuart Mill in 1873 dealt a crippling blow to the hopes of campaigners. Not until 1895, when the new parliament was returned with more than half the members theoretically committed to the principle of women's suffrage, were hopes revived, though in the event these again proved vain" (5)

Despite the attempt to discard it, it remains present within the conscious and unconscious of the individual constituting a threat to one's proper self (Kristeva 2-3).

Significantly, speaking of his various precautions during Medea's lifetime, the Duke explains how "he wears a jacket of mail under his coat; how he drinks only milk from a cow which he has milked in his presence; how he tries his dog with morsels of his food, lest it be poisoned; how he suspects the wax-candles because of their peculiar smell ..."

("Amour" 103). The Duke's act of executing Medea along with his last precaution of protecting his soul from meeting hers in the afterlife are ways of spitting out the abject. The latter, however, is not entirely eradicated as it returns from "its place of banishment" (Kristeva 2). The place of banishment here refers to her grave from which she comes out to continue violating the established order. In doing so, the "otherness" within the male subject is brought to the surface. This otherness can be seen in their effeminate and hysteric side.

Trepka, like the Duke, shows symptoms of madness and horror when Medea's ghost returns. He describes the incident of his first encounter with Medea's ghost as "uncanny" ("Amour" 107). As he passes through one of the rooms when he is leaving the archive, he reflects:

As I was passing, my eye was caught by a very beautiful old mirror-frame let into the brown and yellow inlaid wall. I approached, and looking at the frame, looked also, mechanically, into the glass. I gave a great start and almost shrieked [...]. Behind my own image stood another, a figure close to my shoulder, a face close to mine; and that figure, that face, hers! Medea Da Carpi's I turned sharp round, as white, I think as the ghost I expected to see. ("Amour" 107)

Ghosts, as Peeren puts it, return from the dead determined on “exacting revenge, revealing hidden crimes, continuing a love affair or simply searching for a way to pass on” (1). Their task, she says, is as manifold as their shapes (1). Following Peeren’s point, Medea returns from the dead with a mission to liberate her soul, hence, to carry on her quest for power. Following this incident, Trepka finds a letter from Medea on his desk. He questions in an entry of his diaries: “Am I mad? Or are there really ghosts? That adventure of last night has shaken me to the very depth of my soul” (“Amour” 112). This incident unravels a threat to the notion of masculinity. The impact of Medea’s sense of empowerment on Trepka, Pulham suggests, has had a “castrating” and “diminishing effect” and that with each encounter with her, Trepka becomes “progressively unhinged, showing evidence of hysteria by which he is necessarily feminised” (126). Blindly devoted to her, Trepka follows her request which is articulated in the letter he has found. The letter says:

“To SPERIDION. —Let thy courage be equal to thy love, and thy love shall be rewarded. On the night preceding Christmas, take a hatchet and saw; cut boldly into the body of the bronze rider who stands in the Corte, on the left side, near the waist. Saw open the body, and within it thou wilt find the silver effigy of a winged genius. Take it out, hack it into a hundred pieces, and fling them in all directions, so that the winds may sweep them away. That night she whom thou lovest will come to reward thy fidelity”.

On the brownish wax is the device —

“AOUR DURE—DURE AMOUR.” (“Amour” 119-120).

Trepka follows her instructions as such and destroys the effigy. After completely destroying it, Trepka gets a short vision of Medea’s apparition. He is discovered dead afterwards by some “unknown hand” (“Amour” 126). Medea’s act of return here has a symbolic connection to the women’s movement of emancipation of the 1890s. Her return is

indicative of her refusal to be confined. Having been “chained up in hell” (“Amour” 104) by the Duke, Medea returns to occupy a space of in-betweenness. Like the abject that “does not respect borders, positions, rules” (Krsiteva 4), Medea, in this sense, mirrors the status of the *fin de siècle* woman who refuses to be “chained up” in the traditional feminine role of marriage and chooses to have a career and a life outside domesticity. Lee’s heroines, Liggins argues, escape from their “restrictive gender responsibilities into a more fluid spectrality, where they can assume alternative (non-domestic?) identities” (“Gendering” 42). It is this spectrality which seems to disturb the patriarchal society. Further to this, Lee’s short story “Oke of Okehurst” also known as “Phantom Lover”, shows more insights of women’s transgression of codes of the proper feminine. It also shows how the duality of Mrs Oke’s subjectivity agitates her husband Mr Oke who shows signs of madness towards the end of the story.

The *fin de siècle* marked an end to the Victorian sense of stability and security. This age coincided with the revival of the Gothic as a mode of writing. Rather than being a way of articulating the acute anxieties over the breakdown of the Victorian values, the Gothic also produces a space of ghostliness that functions as a venue of refuge to the female characters and a site of horror for the patriarchal society. The Gothic that features in “Oke of Okehurst” is analogous to that of “Amour Dure”, in that there is always a return of the past upon present, a female revenant and a male character who is concealing “otherness” within him. Despite the presence of classical Gothic elements such as the haunting portraiture, mysterious rooms, murder and ghostly apparitions, Lee leads the way for a more psychological Gothic to evolve in this period of the 1890s. This is particularly detected in the dual self of the female protagonist Alice Okehurst as well as her husband who shows symptoms of psychic destabilisation. Gothic and psychology appear to have a mutual

interest. This implies that the fragmentation of the 1890s society finds a source of expression in the fragmented, yet static language of the Gothic.

“Oke of Okehurst” is narrated by a painter who upon accepting to paint portraits for a mysterious couple William and Alice Okehurst, becomes a witness to a supernatural and mysterious incident taking place in the hosts’ house. The mystery of the story is sensed through the narrator’s words at the beginning of the story when he says: “You remember, three years ago, my telling you I had let myself in for painting a couple of Kentish squireen? I really could not understand what has possessed me to say yes to that man” (“Okehurst” 77). Consequently, the narrator becomes a witness of Mr. Oke’s developing hysteria because of his wife Mrs. Oke. It is revealed, as the story unfolds, that Mrs. Oke is obsessed with a story from the past in her family’s history. It revolves around a poet named Christopher Lovelock who was murdered by his lover Alice Oke, who shares the same name with present Alice, of the seventeenth century and wife of Nickolas Okehurst. It also appears that the current Mrs. Oke has a spectral connection with the poet Lovelock, a fact that drives her husband so insane by the end that he accidentally murders her. The artist-narrator remarks that Mrs. Oke has an indifferent character and pays little attention to her husband as well as to himself. Nevertheless, he adds, the only time where she seemed to give some attention to his conversations was when he has commented on the portrait of the dead Alice remarking that she shares a great resemblance with her. Mrs. Oke shows a reaction of pleasure at the remark, showing her morbid obsession with the portrait of a deadly figure from the past. First, I will show the way Mrs. Oke represents the fear surrounding the alternative spaces that women of the 1890s have begun to pursue. In doing so, some focus will also be given to the sense of feminisation that begins to generate in the male character, her husband, as a result.

Mrs. Oke, remarkably, deviates from the norms of the obedient and subservient wife. Instead, she displays indifference as to her duties of domesticity. The painter comments on the impact that her indifferent behaviour has on her husband Mr Oke:

Yet it seems to me sometimes, that this monotonous life of solitude, by the side of a woman who took no more heed of [her husband] than of a table or a chair, was producing a vague depression and irritation in this young man [...] I often wondered how he could endure it at all, not having, as I had, the interest of a strange psychological riddle to solve (“Okehurst” 89)

Mrs. Oke, like Medea of “Amour Dure”, represents characteristics of the *fin de siècle* New Woman. Because the latter has “multiple identity” (Ledger 1), Mrs. Oke can be said to represent the mannish New Woman who poses a threat to the institution of marriage and to the heteronormative sexual codes of the Victorian era. Her indifference towards her husband is suggestive of the possibility that she is not interested in men. Ledger, in this view, argues about the threats of the New Woman that “there was a very real fear that she may not be at all interested in men, and could manage quite well without them” (5). This finds its example in the mannish character of Mrs. Oke as described by the artist narrator:

I could scarcely believe my senses. This woman, in her mannish little coat and hat, driving a powerful young horse with the utmost skill, and chattering like a school-girl of sixteen, could not be the delicate, morbid, exotic, hot-house creature, unable to walk or to do anything, who spent her days lying about on couches in the heavy atmosphere, redolent with strange scents and associations, of the yellow drawing-room. The movement of the light carriage, the cool draught, the very grind of the wheels upon the gravel, seemed to go to her head like wine. (“Okehurst” 109)

These masculine attributes delineate the way Mrs. Oke challenges the accepted ideals of femininity of the Victorian period. Even indoors, as the narrator explains, she shows a certain passivity in regard to her duties of a wife. Outside, she represents a distinct identity akin to that of the New Woman which was published in *Punch* by cartoonists, portraying a woman with short hair and mannish clothing¹⁶. In addition to her mannish character, Mrs. Oke demonstrates a certain apathy towards the idea of maternity. Because the New Woman as a concept was ambiguous, the notion of motherhood also is complex to explain in relation to this figure. Grand for example championed motherhood. Her essay, where she coined the term New Woman, focuses on the women's movement in education and employment and also advocates for sexual purity. Writers such as Mona Caird, by contrast, show an attack on the idea of motherhood (Ledger 10-11). Lee seems to share Caird's point in the way that Mrs. Oke rejects motherhood. This is seen in the way Mr Oke covertly expresses his complaint about not having children in a dialogue with the narrator:

“It is a nice old place,” he said, “but it’s too large for us. You see, my wife’s health does not allow of our having many guests; and there are no children.”

I thought I noticed a vague complaint in his voice; and he evidently was afraid there might have seemed something of the kind, for he added immediately –

“I don’t care for children one jackstraw, you know, myself; can’t understand how any one can, for my part.”

¹⁶ Ledger describes *Punch* cartoons as they portray women “severely dressed, wearing college ties, and smoking, the women in the illustration are presumably discussing the books which are on the table whilst the man of the house escapes to the servants' hall for a cup of tea and a gossip” (16).

If ever a man went out of his way to tell a lie, I said to myself, Mr. Oke of Okehurst was doing so at the present moment. ("Okehurst" 82)

Mr. Oke's vague complaint indicates a sense of dissatisfaction within him about not having children as well as fear towards expressing his hidden desire of children. This, in a way, symbolises the patriarchal society's fear of this seemingly deviant New Woman who not only threatens the boundaries of marriage but also the procreation which might affect the nation as a whole. Pykett argues, in support of this, that "the spectre of the 'mannish' New Woman who refused her biological destiny of motherhood threatened to dissolve existing gender boundaries" (140). Mrs. Oke's disinterest in having children is what characterizes her as a New Woman figure who resists the traditional conventions of the Victorian culture.

In a similar vein, Mrs. Oke's obsessive fascination with the portrait of seventeenth-century Alice anticipates the arising fear of homosexuality. Some critics have developed this idea. Pulham, for instance, argues that Lee's intention behind adopting the double figure is to express hidden taboos of same sex desires between the two Alices (131). Ruth Robbins also suggests that "the androgynous spectre in Lee's stories might well stand as a code-figure for lesbian desire" (187). Whereas the novel was published in 1886, it is arguable that it anticipates the anxiety over homosexuality almost a decade later that were exacerbated by Oscar Wilde's trials in April 1895¹⁷. While it is true that Mrs. Oke's behaviour of not respecting the boundaries of sex and marriage leaves room for homosexual overtones, my position goes in line with Liggins's point that justifies Mrs. Oke's interest

¹⁷ Oscar Wilde was a homosexual and he has kept it secret noting that it was a criminal offence in nineteenth-century England. He was put on trial in 1895 after his affair with a British aristocrat was exposed and made public. The New Woman has always been examined hand in hand with Wilde's trials this is because, Ledger points out, they both "overtly challenged Victorian sexual codes" (25).

in Alice as a sign of a desire for spectrality as an alternative space to that of the home (“Gendering” 43-44). It is this spectral alternative space which disturbs the patriarchal order. Her act of copying seventeenth-century Alice stems from a desire to be spectral herself without necessarily being deemed as homosexual:

To resemble the Alice Oke of the year 1626 was the caprice, the mania, the pose, the whatever you may call it, of the Alice Oke of 1880; and to perceive this resemblance was the sure way of gaining her graces. [...]. It finished off the strange figure of Mrs. Oke, as I saw it in my imagination—this *bizarre* creature of enigmatic, far-fetched exquisiteness—that she should have no interest in the present, but only an eccentric passion in the past. It seemed to give the meaning to the absent look in her eyes, to her irrelevant and far-off smile. (“Okehurst” 95-96).

Alice from the past was known as “wicked” (“Okehurst” 96) and a “murderess” (“Okehurst” 97). The current Mrs. Oke explains to the narrator how she used to play the role of the “wicked” Alice when she was young. She adds that she has only realised her resemblance to her after her marriage. Also, “So distant from all the women of her time” (“Okehurst” 96), Mrs. Oke seems to come to terms with her identity through copying seventeenth-century Alice. Because Lee’s ghosts are ghosts of the imagination, meaning that they are not visible or material, the ghost of the past Alice is present in Mrs. Oke’s consciousness. This ghost is born from her growing desire to mimic her character.

This invites Freud’s theory of “the uncanny” and “doubling” which came later in 1919, yet this theory remains applicable in this story. One of the things that produces the uncanny effect is the idea of the double. The double occurs when a “person may identify himself with another and so become unsure of his true self; or he may substitute the other’s self for his own. The self may thus be duplicated, divided and interchanged”. (“Uncanny” 142). By adapting past Alice’s identity, Mrs. Oke “substitutes the other’s self” for her own.

Her attempt to embrace past Alice's identity constitutes an ambiguity concerning her current position. It appears that it is this peculiarity which produces the uncanny effect in Mr. Oke, her husband. This ambiguity that results from the double-self that Mrs. Oke experiences is expressed by the narrator who describes her as "alien" ("Okehurst" 88). Besides, as he reflects on her mysterious character, the narrator thinks: "there was a waywardness, a strangeness, which I felt but could not explain—a something as difficult to define as the peculiarity of her outward appearance" ("Okehurst" 88). The mysterious countenance that Mrs. Oke exhibits throughout the story derives from the workings of her dual-self.

Among the first impressions that the narrator gets when he has met Mrs. Oke for the first time is that she "seemed always to have been present in one's consciousness" ("Okehurst" 84). The narrator reflects: "I neither dreaded parting from her, nor felt any pleasure in her presence. I had not the smallest wish to please or to gain her notice. But I had her on the brain" ("Okehurst" 88). This is emblematic of the uncanny effect because "to many people the acme of the uncanny is represented by anything to do with death, dead bodies, revenants, spirits and ghosts" ("Uncanny" 148). By embracing the ghostly identity of the seventeenth-century Alice, the present Alice becomes so powerful that she haunts one's consciousness. This further occurs in the way that she unsettles her husband who appears to be in a state of devastation in the presence of his wife: "it was very curious to see this big, handsome, manly young fellow, who ought to have had any amount of success with women, suddenly stammer and grow crimson in the presence of his own wife" ("Okehurst" 86). In fact, Mr. Oke grows "crimson" because of the ambiguous and unfamiliar status that his wife comes to occupy. This is further expressed by the narrator:

“Isn’t it true that Mrs. Oke tries to look like that portrait?” I asked, with a perverse curiosity.

“Oh, fudge!” he exclaimed, rising from his chair and walking nervously to the window. “It’s nonsense, mere nonsense. I wish you wouldn’t, Alice.” (“Okehurst” 91)

Mr. Oke fears her current obsession with the seventeenth-century Alice character from the past and interprets her fascination with this story of the past as part of her romantic fantasy with the ghost of Lovelock, her ancestress’s secret lover that has been murdered. While this might appear as a mere jealousy from his part, what really disturbs him is the uncanny nature of his wife with “no outer characteristic save a certain restlessness, a perverse desire to surprise and shock, to surprise and shock more particularly her husband” (“Okehurst” 88). Her interest in both characters, Alice of the past and the ghost of Lovelock is sufficient to detect her desire to enter the world of spectrality which per se provokes terror in the male for it challenges the security of his manhood.

Mr. Oke shows a sense of confinement within his home which gestures towards plausible signs of effeminacy which was a serious concern for the *fin de siècle* society. The sense of entrapment that he displays is a psychological one. The theme of confinement becomes synonymous with female Gothic plots; however, this story reveals traces of this entrapment in the male character. Upon his arrival, the artist narrator likens the house of the Okes to a Gothic house: “I began to meditate upon the modern Gothic country house ... And my spirit sank within me, and I cursed my avarice in accepting the commission” (“Okehurst” 79). The Gothic house has always been studied in relation to the psyche of the individual. Studies of eighteenth-century Gothic Romances have argued that the Gothic castle symbolises confinement of the female Gothic heroine who is often locked in one of its mysterious rooms by its master. The end of the nineteenth-century Gothic, on the other

hand, relocates the phenomenon of haunting in the minds. The mind becomes “a kind of supernatural space, filled with intrusive spectral presences” (Castle 167). Lee reverses this notion of the entrapment of the female mind by demonstrating a sense of male confinement in a house haunted by the unfamiliar woman of the *fin de siècle*. This evinces realities about the crisis of masculinity that this age has witnessed.

This seemingly Gothic house of the Okes, indeed, contains one mysterious room. Nevertheless, this room is a place of liberation rather than confinement to the female character Mrs. Oke. Instead, the room leaves a sensation of discomfort in the men that visit it. Mrs. Oke takes the narrator to show him this mysterious yellow chamber where she shows him some old poems that used to belong to Lovelock. The narrator is struck at the way she reads them, commenting that “this strange being read these verses as one might fancy a woman would read love-verses addressed to herself” (“Okehurst” 102). His statement demonstrates the ghostly connotations that this tale centres upon. In addition to the uncanny feeling that this room provokes, the narrator adds that “there was something heavy and oppressive in this beautiful room; something, I thought, almost repulsive in this exquisite woman. She seemed to me, suddenly, perverse and dangerous” (“Okehurst” 103). Liggins, in this light, argues that the yellow room here “anticipates the yellow wallpaper which disturbs the repressed wife in Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s Gothic tale of 1899” (“Gendering” 43). In fact, in this tale, the repression is reversed. This implies that it is Mr. Oke who is disturbed by the yellow room for he believes that the ghost of Mr. Lovelock lives in it. Mrs. Oke, in a dialogue with her husband about the yellow room says:

“The servants! Gracious heavens! do you suppose they haven’t heard the story? Why, it’s as well known as Okehurst itself in the neighbourhood. Don’t they believe that Lovelock has been seen about the house? Haven’t they all heard his footsteps in the big corridor? Haven’t they, my dear Willie, noticed a thousand times that you never will stay a minute alone in the yellow drawing-room— that you run out of it, like a child, if I happen to leave you there for a minute?” (“Okehurst” 99)

The way she tries to instil in him the idea that the ghost of Mr. Lovelock exists can be interpreted as a way of championing the concept of free love which also implies sexual independence outside the constraints of marriage. Mr. Oke’s fear of this room mirrors the patriarchal society’s fears of such transgression of the established order of things. In this room, she keeps a miniature of Mr. Lovelock:

She drew a curtain and displayed a large-sized miniature, representing a young man, [...]. Mrs. Oke took the miniature religiously off its stand, and showed me, written in faded characters upon the back, the name “Christopher Lovelock,” and the date 1626

“Does – does Mr. Oke know that you have got it here?” I asked; and then wondered what in the world had impelled me to put such a question.

Mrs. Oke smiled that smile of contemptuous indifference. “I have never hidden it from any one. If my husband disliked my having it, he might have taken it away, I suppose. It belongs to him since it was found in his house”. (“Okehurst” 128)

The yellow room represents the novelty and newness of women’s experiences away from the constraints of domesticity. The miniature of Lovelock that she insists on keeping without minding her husband shows the way this newness threatens the *status quo* of the Victorian family. In addition to her ambiguous gender as well as her refusal of having

children, cherishing the miniature of Lovelock indicates further her sexual transgression. Thus, the fear that Mr. Oke portrays concerning this room originates from a repressed fear of the new sensibilities of the New Woman as mirrored in his wife. The sort of confinement that the husband experiences is relatable to his sense of feminisation and inability to face the transgressive nature of his wife.

The yellow room, instead, anticipates Virginia Woolf's essay "A Room of One's Own" (1929) where Woolf emphasises the necessity of the woman's retreat in a solitary room which promises a better freedom and allows for her educational capacities to thrive mainly in writing¹⁸. As indicated by the narrator, Mrs. Oke spends most of her time in this room where she reads and "then throwing aside novels and books of poetry, of which she always had a large number" ("Okehurst" 105). Mrs. Oke's retreat from her house responsibilities to the yellow room to read her books of poems represents the New Woman's movement in education that becomes an alternative to domestic duties. The yellow room here is not a symbol of confinement for the woman, instead, it threatens the realm of patriarchy as it represents sexual and educational independence for the woman.

Mr. Oke begins to show symptoms of madness as a result. His hallucinations lead him to see the ghost of Lovelock everywhere. An instance of this takes place when he thinks he has seen his ghost walking with his wife near the pond by their house. When he questions her, she replies: "I can only repeat that no living creature has been near me this afternoon [...] If you saw any one with me, it must have been Lovelock, for there certainly was no

¹⁸ In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf writes: "Give her a room of her own and five hundred a year, let her speak her mind and leave out half that she now puts in, and she will write a better book one of these days" (*Room* 93). This shows the potential challenge that a woman with a room of her own could pose to the area of writing which is dominated by the male. The room here that Woolf alludes to is a symbol of threat.

one else.” (“Okehurst” 127). Because of his mental destabilisation and “in a fit of momentary madness” (“Okehurst” 135), Mr. Oke kills his wife.

Throughout these two short stories, Lee develops the female ghost revenant device that Melissa Edmund Makala describes as a

recurring motif in which female characters, who are either passive or in some way powerless in their lives, are transformed by death and return from the grave as empowered and often intimidating figures seeking revenge on those who wronged them (25).

Although not necessarily with the intention to seek revenge, Lee’s female ghosts, such as Medea Da Carpi and seventeenth-century Alice, return from the grave empowered to shake the stability of patriarchal order that is relevant to the 1890s period. Mrs. Oke like Medea da Carpi can be an abject that destabilises the boundaries of a certain order. In gender terms, the abject destabilises the boundaries of the male subject. Subsequently, the mental condition of the male characters unravels serious concerns related to the future of empire and the nation. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, masculinity has become linked to the empire as it is related to the nation in this period. Rebecca Stott points out that the picture painted by historians is “of a period of history characterised by suspicion, intolerance and perceived vulnerability. Britain had stretched itself out into the corners of the globe and began to find its responsibilities, commitments and power difficult to maintain” (4). The mental instability of the male characters in both “Amour Dure” and “Oke of Okehurst” symbolises the nervousness around the future of nation and empire which was at risk.

Edith Nesbit also tried to distance herself from gender issues occurring at that time, her series of *Grim Tales*, published in 1893 however reveal otherwise¹⁹. She adds to Lee's thematic concerns of the danger of the feminist movement by representing further images of the declining institution of marriage and the sense of family. At the same time, she brings to light the condition of masculinity in the face of the danger of the uncanny New Woman as depicted in "Man Size in Marble" (1887) and also in the face of the emergence of the progress of machinery as depicted in the "Violet Car" (1910). Although it is beyond my interest in this chapter to focus on the theme of the fear surrounding technological advances in modernity, it remains essential to study this short story. Published in 1910, the story highlights the position of masculinity in the face of the haunting machinery and at the same time demonstrates women's position in light of this troubled masculinity. This is made visible through Gothic manifestations which offer the writer a decoded freedom to discuss gender concerns of the *fin de siècle*.

The story of "Man Size in Marble" opens with a newlywed couple Laura and Jack who settle down into a small cottage in a quiet countryside in attempt to escape the busy life of the metropolis, thinking that it will help them achieve their tasks, for Laura is a writer and Jack is a painter. They decide to hire a housekeeper called Mrs. Dorman who after few days leaves them with an excuse that she ought to assist her ill daughter. Laura shows her dissatisfaction at the servant's decision. Because she "hated housekeeping" ("Marble" 19), Laura reacts angrily:

¹⁹ Amelia A. Rutledge asserts that Nesbit distanced herself from the politics of feminist movements. (223)

“And I shall have to cook the dinners, and wash up the hateful greasy plates; and you’ll have to carry cans of water about, and clean the boots and knives – and we shall never have any time for work, or earn any money, or anything. We shall have to work all day, and only be able to rest when we are waiting for the kettle to boil” (“Marble” 20).

Laura rejects domestic duties such as housework for they interrupt her task of writing. The character of Laura like Lee’s female characters demonstrates newness in women’s behaviour within the house. Her character resonates with Ledger’s characterization of the New Woman writers who sought to promote “an intelligent, sensitive, and sexually healthy woman, who often had ambitions beyond motherhood [...] and the necessity of a broader education of women” (76).

As the story progresses, Jack learns from the housekeeper about a legend which reveals that their house was part of an estate that belonged to some evil lords whose marble statues lie at the local church in their town. The legend says that these effigies wake up every year in All Saints’ Eve to go back to their old property which is now the dwelling of Jack and Laura. The housekeeper explains:

“and as the church clock strikes eleven they walks out of the church door, and over the graves, and along the bier-balk, and if it’s a wet night there’s the marks of their feet in the morning.”

[...] “whatever you do, sir, lock the door early on All Saints’ Eve, and make the cross-sign over the doorstep and on the windows.” (“Marble” 25).

Jack considers this legend as an “obvious fiction” (“Marble” 25) and decides not to inform his wife Laura about it: “partly because a legend concerning our house might perhaps trouble my wife, and partly, I think, from some more occult reason.” (“Marble” 25). While this story does not include the sort of ghosts that populate Lee’s short stories examined

here, it still delineates Gothic sensibilities apparent in the supernatural legend of the effigies that come back from the dead²⁰. The legend of the effigies that return in ghostly form permits a connection with Walpole's ghost of Alfonso in *Castle of Otranto*. The ghost of Alfonso the Good is represented as a giant "figure in black marble" (*Otranto* 10). While the ghost of Alfonso returns to uncover the falsity of King Manfred and give back the throne to its rightful owner, the marbles of Nesbit do uncover the failings and the insecurity of the *fin de siècle* English manhood.

Jack does not take the matter seriously because the legend opposes the Victorian realism and sense of rational. However, the supernatural return of the effigies foreshadows a coming threat that would shake the confidence of the Victorian masculinity. Throughout the story, Jack shows a confident masculinity as he carries out patriarchal responsibility in the way he treats his wife. She is deemed by him as "always nervous" ("Marble" 24), and also, childlike in the way in which she always seems in need of his protection. The confidence of Victorian manhood begins to destabilise as the legend of the effigies turns out to be real. One night, Jack goes out to have his pipe refusing to take Laura with him. When she proposes to accompany him, he says: "'No, sweetheart, not to-night; you're much too tired. I shan't be long'" ("Marble" 27). Ignoring Mrs. Dorman's warnings, he leaves the door of the cottage unlocked. He decides to go to the church instead of going back to the cottage. On his way, he hears a sound breaking "the stillness of the night, it was rustling in the wood" and also reflects "I went on, and now distinctly heard another step than mine answer mine like an echo" ("Marble" 28). Jack believes that the sounds he hears

²⁰ Nick Freeman points out that as a Gothic story, "Man Size in Marble" is "a little misleading, for its spectres are not the airy phantoms that such a designation leads one to expect, and the tale is imbued with radical political energy in a way that remains unusual in Gothic fiction a century later" (457).

are an echo of his footsteps and keeps walking towards the church. Finding its door unlatched, he thinks:

It will seem strange, perhaps, that I should have gone half-way up the aisle before I remembered—with a sudden chill, followed by as sudden a rush of self-contempt—that this was the very day and hour when, according to tradition, the “shapes drawn out man-size in marble” began to walk.

Having thus remembered the legend, and remembered it with a shiver, of which I was ashamed, I could not do otherwise than walk up towards the altar, just to look at the figures (“Marble” 29)

Jack receives the terror he gets from remembering the story with shame because it challenges the confidence of his manhood and reveals his effeminate side that he wishes to conceal by constantly reminding himself that he does not believe in the legend; he says: “really what I wanted was to assure myself, first, that I did not believe the legend, and, secondly, that it was not true” (“Marble” 29). So, he tries to prove the falsity of this legend and to tell “Mrs. Dorman how vain her fancies were, and how peacefully the marble figures slept on through the ghastly hour” (“Marble” 29). To his surprise, “The “bodies drew out man-size” *were gone*, and their marble slabs lay wide and bare in the vague moonlight that slanted through the east window” (“Marble” 29). The legend of the marbles is employed, perhaps, as a way to mirror an outside threat to the English masculinity in the *fin de siècle*. It can be said that Nesbit draws upon Gothic tones of this supernatural legend to project the failings of English masculinity subject to the threat of degeneration. Degeneration is linked

to mental illness²¹. Its signs begin to occur in Jack, in this case, as he questions his sanity after seeing the marbles' tombs empty: "Were they really gone? Or was I mad? [...]. And then a horror seized me, a horror indefinable and indescribable – an overwhelming certainty of supreme and accomplished calamity." ("Marble" 30). The calamity here can be said to refer to the malaise that the period of the *fin de siècle* has witnessed. Given that the concern over the condition of masculinity was linked to the empire, it thus refers to the sense of vulnerability affecting the British empire as well as the difficulty to preserve this power that was being taken away²². In Jack's case, it is his manhood that was being taken away by this supernatural legend.

Jack meets his only friend in this village Dr. Kelly, who is a psychiatrist, on the way home. He tells him about the incident of the disappearing effigies. Dr. Kelly laughs at him and convinces him that it was a mere delusion from his part: "'Rubbish, man," said he; "d'ye think I'll permit of that? Are ye to go saying all yer life that ye've seen solid marble endowed with vitality, and me to go all my life saying ye were a coward? No, sir – ye shan't do ut."'" ("Marble" 31). It is arguable that the doctor's statement here demonstrates the shame that Jack's effeminate side would bring to the future of manhood through deeming him as a coward. Jack reflects on this statement that "the word 'coward' was a mental shower-bath" ("Marble" 31). This shows the extent to which his manhood has been placed in a state of mockery and abuse by the doctor's remarks. This recalls Samuel Smiles's ideas

²¹ Andrew Smith, in his book *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity, and the Gothic at the Fin-de-siècle* (2004), points out that "A principal target of Nordau's was what he saw as an effeminate 'emotionalism' which constituted a key aspect of the 'mental stigma of degenerates'" (16)

²² Rebecca Stott says about the decline of the British empire that characterises the *fin de siècle* that the focus was mainly on the "preservationism at all costs: the empire must not be seen to be slipping away" (4).

around degeneration suggesting that “the future of the ‘state’ is thus linked to the vitality and courage of the individuals which compose it” (Qtd in Smith 18). It is therefore arguable that the supernatural element in this story is employed to bring to surface crucial anxieties that the patriarchal society has been living by the end of the nineteenth century, most important of which is the state of masculinity. Jack’s effeminate position when confronted by the supernatural element of the revived effigies is essential for it shows realistic connotations of a jeopardized masculinity.

Dr. Kelly insists that Jack accompany him to the church to prove to him that his incident is delusional. Indeed, the effigies were there laying in their tombs, however, Jack notices that one of them has got a damaged hand; he says: “I was certain that it had been perfect the last time Laura and I had been there” (“Marble” 31). Dr. Kelly speculates that somebody ““has tried to remove them”” (“Marble” 31). The doctor’s interpretation seems to oppose the supernatural aspect of the story as he attempts to remain rational. They walk back home and the scene witnessed by them as they reach the cottage reveals a serious threat as they find Laura dead with

her eyes wide, wide open. They saw nothing now. What had they seen last? [...] her hands were tightly clenched. In one of them she held something fast. When I was quite sure that she was dead, and that nothing mattered at all any more, I let him open her hand to see what she held. It was a grey marble finger (“Marble” 32).

Laura’s death can be misinterpreted as a form of women’s victimization, eliminating her from the category of the New Woman. Although her character demonstrates attributes of the New Woman at the beginning of the story, her death makes her position rather complex. Freeman asks if Nesbit’s aim was to write a feminist Gothic “does Laura have to die?” (463). He interprets Laura’s death as the writer’s way to show the consequences of not taking women’s mental condition seriously and suggest a possible rape indicating the

violence of sexuality in the 1890s (464). One important point to highlight here, however, is the grey marble finger that she has held while dead. This missing marble finger indicates a form of resistance and a possible emasculation of the effigies who return to their graves damaged.

The supernatural legend of the effigies prefigures a threat to the status of masculinity as Jack fails to protect his wife causing her death in the end by ignoring the warnings of Mrs. Dorman and leaving the door of the cottage unlocked. The realistic return of the effigies brings to light a destabilized sense of the patriarchal rationality and exposes the decline of the idealised Victorian manhood. The death of Laura, on the other hand, does not victimize the female character because she has obviously resisted the attack of the effigies before her death and, as Freeman notes, it unravels the flaws in the pride of Victorian masculinity (461).

The destabilisation of the allure of masculinity by the *fin de siècle* is argued to be emblematic of the “shock of the new” (Liggins “Beyond” 33). This means that the insecurity that the male characters show can be a symptom of the rapid changing of modern life. Lynda Dryden, for instance, remarks that “city life was linked to a tendency to degeneration” (8). Nesbit’s short story “The Violet Car” (1903) resonates with the threat that machinery poses to man. This fear, as it affects the male character in this tale, is communicated through Gothic tones because “Gothic in particular has been theorized as an instrumental genre, reemerging cyclically, at periods of cultural stress, to negotiate the anxieties that accompany social and epistemological transformations and crises” (Hurley 5). Significant to the *fin de siècle* stress, Janet E. Hogarth asks:

What is the cause of this strange disease of modern life? Chiefly a development of mechanical inventions and contrivances of civilisation, which has far outstripped even Nature's immense capacity for adapting organ to function. The growth of large towns is in itself an important factor in nerve wear and tear, not to mention the weariness, and veritable plague of modern novels. Our fathers had no time to adjust their nervous system to this vastly increased demand upon its resources (586)

The "Violet Car" represents this "strange disease" in ghostly terms. The story is about a couple haunted by the ghost of a violet motor car that killed their only daughter. It is told by a female nurse who was called to a house in Charleston for an unusual case that involves a mentally ill man who can hear and see a ghost of a violet car which appears to have killed their only daughter and also brings his dismay in the end. As she arrives, the nurse is confused who she is assisting because she has been written for by the husband, "to attend on his wife, who was, he said, slightly deranged" ("Violet" 174). However, she soon notices: "so, I knew, and in as inexplicable a way, that with these two fear lived. It looked at me out of their eyes. And I knew, too, that this fear was not her fear" ("Violet" 176). The fear, indeed, occurs in the male character Mr Robert Eldridge who "has never been the same since" ("Violet" 176) his daughter's death caused by the Violet car. Mrs. Eldridge explains to the narrator:

"It was a violet-coloured car that killed our Bessie. You know, our girl that I've told you about. And it's a violet-coloured car that he thinks he sees – every day up there in the lane. And he says he hears it, and that he smells the smell of machinery – the stuff they put in it – you know."

"Petrol?"

“Yes, and you can *see* he hears it, and you can *see* he sees it. It haunts him, as if it was a ghost...” (“Violet” 179)

The representation of the motorcar as a ghost that haunts and destabilises the male’s subject is a way of demonstrating the fear surrounding degeneration. Degeneration in Gothic literature has been mainly associated with anxieties about the nature of human being. The concept of human as such is challenged²³. The ghostly nature of the motor-car lies in the way that it only occurs to Mr Eldridge who seems to be the only one who can see it and hear it. The ghostly element of the motor-car is what brings Mr Eldridge’s deranged subject to the surface, hence, showing signs of degeneracy.

The form of degeneration that keeps reoccurring in the short stories of Lee and Nesbit is the one associated with fear about a psychologically diseased masculinity or as Smith refers to it a “potentially pathologised masculinity” (35). In this view, “The Violet Car” enacts “gothicized “otherings”” (Hogle 499) within the subjectivity of Mr Eldridge. Mr Eldridge denies his actual disordered mental condition and he instead projects it on his wife who “shewed no sign of mental derangement” (“Violet” 175). Convinced that she is the one who is mad, she says to the nurse:

“You will take care of her,” he said, “I don’t want her to get talking to people. She fancies things.”

“What form do the illusions take?” I asked, prosaically.

“She thinks I’m mad,” he said, with a short laugh.

²³ See Kelly Hurley’s introduction in her book, *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin De Siecle* (1996), pp. (4-5) for more details on the Gothic and the abhuman.

“It’s a very usual form. Is that all?”

“It’s about enough. And she can’t hear things that I can hear, see things that I can see, and she can’t smell things. By the way, you didn’t see or hear anything of a motor as you came up, did you?” (“Violet” 175).

It appears through this conversation that Mr Eldridge’s male pride is affronted by his wife who is aware of his mental condition as well as the nurse who is called to assist him. The violet car that haunts Mr Eldridge can be regarded as “an abject”, hence an external threat. Similar to the supernatural element of the revenant effigies in “Man Size in Marble”, the violet car is deployed as an abject that represents an external threat which uncovers the vulnerability of Victorian manhood during the 1890s. Indeed, Emmett Stinson argues that although the advances of technology raised a feeling of national pride, they also triggered immense anxiety in the sense that they were challenging the nature of being human (40). The implication of this can be seen in the speed of the car that “moved like magic-or like the dream of a train” (“Violet” 173). This indicates a ghostly manifestation that symbolises the way it challenges the nature of human as well as the horrors and panic of modernity over the future status of the man. Paul Ryder in his study of the representation of motor-cars in the works of E. M Foster and F. Scott Fitzgerald argues that “the automobile is represented as a semantic and structural mechanism of near oxymoronic significance: on one hand a vehicle of agency and conquest, and on the other a machine of death and destruction” (3). In line with Nesbit’s short story, there is an illustration of the haunting effects of machinery upon the psychology of the individual in the sense that the car becomes a Gothic symbol of a wider unknown fear which renders this device rather uncanny. Prior to learning the story behind the violet car, the nurse reacts to Mr Eldridge’s constant hallucinations about the motor-car thinking: “apparently, to these simple people a motor was a great novelty as to me” (“Violet” 175). The desirable newness of machinery is

accompanied by terror and a sense of abjection. Accordingly, abjection “is immoral, sinister, scheming, and shady: a terror that disassembles, a hatred that smiles, a passion that uses the body for barter instead of inflaming it, a debtor who sells you up, a friend who stabs you” (Kristeva 4). This applies to the element of the motor-car here for it seems to be a desired object for its novelty, yet “stabs” you.

The couple have a habit of walking up to the lane everyday where their daughter has been killed by the motor-car. Mrs. Eldridge explains to the nurse: ““we don’t stop walking because our girl was killed on the road.”” (“Violet” 179). One evening, Mrs. Eldridge could not accompany her husband, for she has twisted her ankle. She suggests that the nurse walks with him instead. Walking through the lane in silence, the nurse reflects:

At that corner he stopped suddenly, caught my arm, dragged me back. His eyes followed something that I could not see. Then he exhaled a held breath, and said. “I thought I heard a motor coming.” He had found it hard to control his terror, and I saw beads of sweat on his forehead and temples. Then we went back to the house. (“Violet” 180).

The ghost motor-car is something other and alien to the self of Mr Eldridge. When the abject haunts the subject, the latter attempts to throw it off in the way that Mr Eldridge condemns this device and refers to it as “motor-devils” (“Violet” 180). However, the abject returns in the way that he imagines “a motor car coming” and “The sweat on his forehead and temples”. These are signs of the subject’s recognition of it. Machinery, Liggins argues, “is both glamorous and fatal, the empty, phantom car anticipating a dystopian future when fearful machines may be out of the control of their owners” (“Beyond” 40). The attempt of throwing off the abject of the motor car means an attempt towards protecting one’s self from the danger of the antihuman “fearful machines”. Kristeva explains that the act of throwing off the abject is a necessary procedure to protect the subject from becoming

“other.” She conceives this through examples of bodily fluids that are “improper” and that need to be ejected in order to protect the self:

this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death, or the sickly, acrid smell of sweat, of decay, does not *signify* death. In the presence of signified death – a flat encephalograph, for instance – I would understand, react, or accept. No, as in true theatre, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses *show me* what I permanently thrust aside in order to live. These body fluids, this defilement, this shit are what life withstands, hardly and with difficulty, on the part of death (3).

Not strictly linked to the throwing off of bodily fluids expressed by Kristeva here, the character of Mr Eldridge, likewise, having witnessed the death of his daughter caused by the violet car, he is shown what he has to “permanently thrust aside” in order to live. This means that his physical encounter with his daughter’s corpse that is covered with the bodily fluid of the blood, he is confronted with his own mortality and even his own death. As such, the individual enters a realm of abjection which is a space of transition and transformation. The process of abjection, Hogle points out, “is thoroughly social and cultural as it is personal” (7). Given that Mr Eldridge’s experience is personal, it reflects “social and cultural” concerns over the threatening decline of English masculinity that can be said to occupy a space of abjection.

By the end of the story, Mr Eldridge is himself knocked down by the ghostly violet car. “from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master” (Kristeva 2); the motor-car in this sense does not cease challenging the subject of Mr Eldridge causing his death as he fails to recognize it. Witnessing the incident, the nurse comments that his face:

Was turned towards a motor car that shot up the lane – It came very swiftly, and before it came to where he was, I knew that it was very horrible. I crushed myself back in the crackling bare hedge, as I should have done to leave room for the passage of a real car – though I knew that this one was not real. It looked real – but I knew it was not.

As it neared him, he started back, then suddenly he cried out. I heard him. ‘No, no, no, no – no more, no more,’ was what he cried, with that he flung himself down on the road in front of the car, and its great tyres passed over him. Then the car shot past me and I saw what the full horror of it was. There was no blood – that was not the horror. The colour of it was, as she had said, violet. (“Violet” 183)

Besides the death incident of Mr Eldridge, the presence of the nurse to witness its horrors is indicative of the position of women in face of the crisis of masculinity. In addition to the suggested threat of machinery of modernity that is central to this short story, this passage makes it arguable that the position of the nurse as a witness of this macabre incident anticipates the position of modern women who are left to assist and deal with the death of men that the historical event of the First World War brings upon them. The female character here foreshadows the role that modern women have to undertake while the status of the Victorian masculinity begins to deteriorate in the early twentieth century. The statement of “I saw what the full horror of it was” foreshadows the horrors that women witness at the war front when carrying their role of war aid. Because ghosts are there to reveal a hidden terror, Hogle speaking of the power of the Gothic, evidences this in his words:

The longevity and power of Gothic fiction unquestionably stem from the way it helps us address and disguise some of the most important desires, quandaries, and sources of anxiety, from the most internal and mental to the widely social and cultural, throughout the history of western culture since the eighteenth century (4)

The ghost of the motor-car that only the nurse besides Mr Eldridge have seen, anticipates the coming terror of the Great War and the horrors that women had to live when witnessing its atrocities. Instances of this will be highlighted in the second section of the following chapter of May Sinclair that will focus on women's position at the battlefield. Sinclair in this sense offers vivid illustrations of women's position as they try to move beyond their domestic constraints during the period of the 1910s-until the war of 1914 forces them to keep looking back, as they feel the responsibility to restore a damaged masculinity to its old powerful state.

This chapter has argued that both Lee and Nesbit negotiate the woman question despite their attempt to distance themselves from gender politics of their times. This is achieved through Gothic devices of the ghost revenant that brings to light the threats that the New Woman of the 1890s brought upon the patriarchal society and the way the figure, despite its ambiguity, has destabilized the sense of order of patriarchy as well as uncovered the failings of the Victorian confidence in its English manhood. While Lee tended to focus on the historical past of Italy, as seen in "Amour Dure", she in fact draws upon the main gender concerns of *fin de siècle* England that can be discerned through the strong affinity of her female characters with the infamous figure of the New Woman. Nesbit also, known mainly as a writer of children fiction, demonstrates through the supernatural lens of the Gothic the major anxieties of the threat of a pathologizing masculinity as her male characters can be deemed as degenerate figures through the flaws of their mental condition that denotes a crisis of masculinity. As far as the Gothic as a mode of writing is concerned,

both writers have employed a certain degree of its tangible devices such as female revenants coming out of the portraits, revenant marble effigies and ghostly motor-cars, but they have also focused on its psychological manifestations through the depiction of the haunted psychologies of male characters. Smith points out about Lee's Gothic that it paves the way for modernist sensibilities that follow in her tackling of fragmented subjectivity (85). Indeed, the next chapter will show how Sinclair takes the Gothic to a more psychological dimension in her treatment of the complex position of her women characters.

Chapter Three: The Gothic Aesthetics of Modernism in May Sinclair's *Uncanny Stories* and War Fictions

The Gothic has lasted as it has because its symbolic mechanisms, particularly its haunting and frightening spectres, have permitted us to cast many anomalies in our modern condition, even as these change, over onto antiquated or at least haunted spaces and highly anomalous creatures (Hogle 6)

This chapter offers a continuity to my analysis of Lee and Nesbit's work in the previous chapter in the way that it focuses on women's experience from the Edwardian period to the beginnings of the First World War. The anxieties triggered by the New Woman as seen in the previous chapter lead to more concerns about the future of the nation which recognises this threat to the heart of the home space. The fear is centred on the idea of women having the vote and the impact it constitutes on the boundaries of family life. Sinclair's *Uncanny Stories* displays affinities with some concerns of the Edwardian period that have been initiated by the New Woman of the end of the nineteenth century. Her war novels, *Tree of Heaven* (1917) and *The Romantic* (1920) also tally with the events of the First World War and thus sketch vivid images of women's experience at the home front. Seen in the movement of the New Woman as represented through ghostly female revenants of Lee and Nesbit, Sinclair introduces a further innovation to the Gothic, one that is compatible with the Modernist period. This lies in the transition of its elements from their physicality as occurs in her *Uncanny Stories* to become more internalised as can be seen in the war novels that will be examined here. This is achieved by dealing with women's struggle in regard to preserving their newly gained power, first initiated by the feminist movement of the end of the nineteenth century. The position of her female characters is marked by fear of

uncertainty, which emanates from their growing hesitance and ambivalence regarding their place as wives and mothers. Hence, the female characters represented in Sinclair's selected works are often pictured as haunted by the traditional roles of their grandmothers while they try to move beyond such traditional conventions.

Sinclair takes us on a journey of Gothic transformation from the Edwardian period to the period of the First World War. Through her *Uncanny Stories*, one can see the way Sinclair uses Gothic devices of the ghostly to express women's anxieties that only Gothic can make visible. Its language of the haunting of unknown presences helps to channel the fear that lurks within the individual. Not surprisingly, the Gothic continues to leave traces in her two war fictions *The Tree of Heaven* and *The Romantic*. It shifts from the tangible elements of ghostly presences in her *Uncanny Stories* to a figurative form in her fiction which is apparent in the metaphorical discourse of vampirism which will be examined in the second section of this chapter. Sinclair's Gothic approach centralizes around the uncanny and the unseen, using them as a way of representing the woman's power but also her potential vulnerability to the impact of a war. The war offers the woman more freedom physically than before while subjecting her consciousness to the psychological crisis of a damaged masculinity that she is bound to redeem. This chapter will show that the supernatural powers that Sinclair's female characters possess symbolise the way in which women's power and newfound autonomy in the modern world become threatened from within as well as from without. It is challenged from within by the haunting of a past that threatens to return and from without by the nation's reinforcement of certain ideologies that are emblematic of the outcome of the First World War.

"The Intercessor" (1911) was published in a time where the ongoing awareness about the health of the empire has placed a responsibility on mothers as they have been considered a matter of imperial importance. This story, I argue, reflects the ambivalent position of

mothers in light of the emerging emphasis upon improving the health of future children. This is demonstrated through the female character Mrs. Falshaw who delineates a sense of ambivalence towards the notion of motherhood. The story opens with a male protagonist, called Garvin, a “hunter of old things” (“Intercessor” 178) who is looking for a quiet place for his new work at the Blackadder enterprise. Garvin insists that the place must have no children in it. He is eventually directed to the Falshaw’s house. Ignoring the mystery hinted at by the villagers about the place and reassured that it is child-free, he decides to stay in it. His work trip, however, turns into a sinister journey. Upon arriving to the building, Garvin discovers that the family has old secrets. To his surprise, the house appears to be haunted by a ghost child named Effy. He learns later in the story that this child has been abandoned by her mother in the past and that she returns from the dead to seek motherly affection. This leaves room to argue that the mother’s abandonment of the child is an expression of rejecting her maternal body. The act of return of the dead child is there to reveal her ambivalence regarding her act of rejecting her child. Coinciding with the rising concerns over motherhood in the Edwardian period, the nation’s anxieties along with the ambivalence of the mother are transmitted to the reader through a combination of Gothic and psychoanalysis, “the uncanny” theory in particular, for its mutual concerns with the Gothic. “The uncanny” theory emerged from an essay by Freud in 1919. It has been used extensively in the field of Gothic studies since its existence because the theory resonates with Gothic sensibilities of uncertainty and the horror that results from the returns of hidden aspects of one’s self. Its effect also occurs when the individual is lost between the familiar and unfamiliar, the homely and unhomely. Freud says, in his essay, that the uncanny “belongs to the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread. It is equally beyond doubt that the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, and so it commonly merges with what arouses fear in general” (“Uncanny” 123).

Modernism per se as a period can be considered as uncanny because of the Gothicised history that is symptomatic of the horrors produced by the Great War in particular. Pamela L. Caughie confirms this by arguing that “Modernist texts are suffused with tropes, and instances of spectres, phantoms, ghouls, spirits, doppelganger, galvanized corpses, and so on [...]. In a very real sense, modernism is rooted in the uncanny” (37). As far as gender is concerned, women writers’ uncanny Modernism focuses mainly on the female character’s subjectivity as a site of horror and uncertainty. This finds its example in the way “the uncanny” is applied in the in “the Intercessor”, particularly through its central motif of the “return of the repressed” which has grown to be quintessential to Gothic studies. Valdine Clemens states, in this regard, that “[the] “return of the repressed” or emergence of whatever has been previously rejected by consciousness, is a fundamental dynamism of Gothic narratives” (4). Claire Drewery also adds that:

A discernible shift between the ‘traditional’ and the experimental uncanny tale occurred when the Victorian fascination with the occult gave way in the early twentieth century to an interest in the newly-developing science of psychoanalysis: a palpable influence on the works of both Sinclair and Woolf (67)

The influence of psychoanalysis occurs in Sinclair’s straightforward focus on “the return of the repressed”. The “repressed” in this story, I argue, takes place in the way that Mrs Falshaw represses her maternal duty through abandoning her child. The “repressed” here finds its expression through the uncanny impulses of Mrs Falshaw:

She rose as Garvin entered, and turned, as if she suffered the impulse of the pregnant woman to hide herself.

He approached her, uttering some such soft and inarticulate sound as he would have used to soothe a shy animal. As she swung heavily round and faced him he saw that he was likely to be mistaken as to Mrs Falshaw's impulses. Otherwise he would have said that it was she who was afraid. But whatever her instinct was, fear or hostility, it already was submerged in the profound apathy of her gloom. ("Intercessor" 181)

The uncanny, Nicholas Royle says: "involves feeling of uncertainty, in particular regarding the reality of who one is and what is being experienced. Suddenly one's sense of oneself (of one's so called 'personality' or 'sexuality', for example) seems strangely questionable" (1). Mrs Falshaw in the passage above exhibits such uncertainty, which could be symptomatic of her ambivalence regarding her maternal position. This is apparent in the impulse that she shows in the sense that she seems to hide herself in an attempt to conceal her pregnancy. Added to this is the sense of ambivalence that she displays through the complexity of "fear and hostility" submerging in the uncanny allure of her countenance. This uncanny allure is born from a sense of uncertainty as well as her questionable status as described by the narrator. The uncertainty that is detected by the narrator is revealed, as the story unfolds, to be linked to a possible return of repressed memories about the child she had once abandoned.

The first instances of the return of this child appear when Garvin, while staying in his mysterious room, begins to hear strange sounds of a child crying. He assumes that the child belongs to Anny, the Falshaws' niece, that she must be hiding him in one of the upper rooms:

it was hardly a crying, a sobbing, a whimpering rather, muffled by closed doors. The wonder was how it could have waked him; the sound was so distant, so smothered, so inarticulate.

It went on for a long time, and Garvin could not say whether it ceased or whether he slept through it. He knew he did sleep. ("Intercessor" 185)

The first instances of the child's ghostly return lurk in the cries that Garvin hears at night. The sounds he hears become more materialised the next night. Garvin

saw a girl child standing on the garret stair. It had on a short nightgown that showed its naked feet. It was clinging to the rail with one hand.

Its face was so small, so shrunken and so bleached, that at first its actual features were indistinct to him. What was distinct, appallingly distinct, was the look it had; a look not to be imagined or defined, and thinkable only as a cry, an agony, made visible. ("Intercessor" 188)

Garvin learns later from Anny that the child used to belong to Mrs Falshaw and that she has left it to die only to return in ghostly form to haunt the house. Anny explains that Mrs Falshaw abandoned her child when she heard about an affair that her husband was having with another woman. However, if we examine the story from the perspective of the responsibility put on mothers in the 1910s, it becomes noticeable that the story bears more serious connotations as to the position of Mrs Falshaw who represents the Edwardian mother. In this view, Andrew Kunka and Michele Troy suggest that the ghost of Effy embodies "domestic unhappiness" (134). This is partly true because the abandoning of the child has a symbolic significance to women's desire to reject the life of domestic confinement which the responsibility of motherhood brings upon her. Anny explains to Garvin that: "the first thing she did was to turn it out of the bed where it used to sleep with

her.’ [...] ‘When she was older she turned it out of her room – that long room in the front. It had to sleep by itself in some place at the back – ’” (“Intercessor” 207). The act of turning the child out of the bed and then from the room altogether suggests a sense of rebellion against her maternal position.

Among the political ideologies that sought to ensure a better future for the English race was that of eugenics. Advocates of this ideology saw that the future of the population was at risk and hence committed themselves to better the condition of the race²⁴. As such, a task they considered fundamental to fulfil their aim was centralised on the mother. They emphasized the idea that she has to improve her mothering skills with highlighting the importance of the child’s health because it is considered as “crucial to the maintenance of the Empire” (Buckley 136). An ideal motherhood, as such, was “an essential component in their ideology of racial health and purity” (Davin 12). This ideology of motherhood is an endeavour from the patriarchal society to preserve the boundaries of family life that was being threatened by the women’s continuous movement for the vote. Granting the vote would mean “an attack upon the patriarchal family structure” (Buckley 134). This is why more importance has been directed towards supervising the task of mothering.

In link with “The Intercessor”, Mrs Falshaw’s act of discarding her child can be regarded as a rebellious act against her maternal body. Ghosts, as Suzanne Raitt states, return “to remind the living of an anguish that refuses to remain in the past and threatens to overwhelm the present” (27). Indeed, the ghost of Effy returns to remind Mrs Falshaw of her productive maternal body as well as her mothering duty that she has tried to throw

²⁴ See Anna Davin’s article: “Imperialism and Motherhood” (1978) for further details.

away. The repetitive returns of Effy means repetitive returns of the notion of motherhood from the past. Historically, the Edwardian period witnessed widespread concerns over the woman question. For example, there was a notable fear that women's emancipation will entail a danger to the condition of the race because the woman's focus will be on her career life rather than sticking to her natural duty of childbearing (Richardson 43). The uncertainty that Mrs Falshaw displays is indicative of this uncertainty surrounding the period of the 1910s in what concerns the woman question. In addition to rejecting Effy, Mrs Falshaw displays a negative stance towards her unborn child who she assumes will die and which indeed miscarries in the end of the story. The narrator remarks that "She had got it into her head that the unborn thing had died within her or would die. A curse was on her. She would never be the mother of a living child" ("Intercessor" 182). Indeed, George M. Johnson notes that: "her novels are populated by women who have negative attitudes towards childbearing and whose babies miscarry or die of neglect" (116). Mrs Falshaw's doom that Garvin remarks, on his arrival at their place, grows out of this sense of uncertainty in relation to motherhood. The use of the supernatural here is a way to show that all that is hidden or repressed has the potential to come back. Also, it is essential to note that the ghost of Effy is not a harmful ghost; it reappears to bring the ambivalent position of her mother to the fore.

This ambivalence begins to take a better shape when Mrs Falshaw seems to show affection towards the returning ghost of Effy in the way that she shows a desire to embrace it after the death of her new-born child. After the death of her new-born child, the ghost of Effy appears in Mrs Falshaw's room:

As Garvin stooped suddenly and lifted the dead child from the bed, he saw Effy slide through his hands into its place. In Mrs Falshaw's eyes there was neither fear nor any discernment of the substitution; yet she saw as he saw. She saw with sanity. Her arms pressed the impalpable creature, as it were flesh to flesh; and Garvin knew that Effy's passion was appeased. ("Intercessor" 216)

Embracing the ghost of Effy proves to be contradictory with her early attitude of rejecting it. It is arguable that her negative attitude towards the unborn child can be seen as symptomatic of a hidden desire to eject her maternal role. As it dies in childbirth, nevertheless, the desire is reverted in that she embraces and accepts the ghost of Effy. In line with the Edwardian period's anxieties about the women emancipation, it can be deduced that Mrs Falshaw's complex attitudes reflect the dilemma of some mothers during this period.

Despite the complexity of the position that she portrays, it is remarkable that she has a firm character that is indicative of the power that women were gaining in this period. She inspires strength and perplexity within the male spectator as seen in her husband: "it struck Garvin then that Falshaw was afraid of his wife" ("Intercessor" 180). The fearful status of Mrs Falshaw also reveals signs of a corresponding effeminacy apparent in her husband: "He seemed unable to face another man fairly and squarely in the presence of his wife" ("Intercessor" 182). The effeminacy of the man, Angelique Richardson states, is an expression of degeneration (43). While this story is not a feminist text in a straightforward way, it manifests the potential anxiety that the seemingly strong position of Mrs Falshaw generates with her rejection of her maternal body and the sense of fear she instils in her male counterparts including her husband and the narrator.

This short story permits a closer link to the ambivalent role that the modern woman is to take during the outbreak of the Great War as well as the horrors that her new position

produces. This will be further explained in the last section of this chapter that looks at women's position at both the war front and home front as it echoes the way female characters come to forcefully take a spiritual role of mother to their men. I suggest, in this respect, that there is an emerging thread between her uncanny short stories and the war novels. To clarify, the rejection of Effy in "the Intercessor" only to be embraced by his abandoning mother by the end mirrors the way the female characters, in the selected war fictions in this chapter, come to embrace a form of spiritual motherhood as opposed to domestic motherhood. The short story that follows, "The Flaw in the Crystal" (1912), shows the beginnings of the leading role that the female character comes to perform through the healing of a mentally ill male character at the cost of losing her power and the sense of uncertainty she experiences in doing so.

Modernism is described by Lindy Van Rooyen as "an age of anxiety" and it is not unusual to come across fragmented and distressed subjectivities in the literary works of this period (9). In "The Flaw in the Crystal", Sinclair focuses on spiritualism as a Gothic device in order to give an insight into the role that women were playing as healers as part of reassessing their empowerment. Maren Tova Linett points out that the heroine's healing powers in this story "give her the authority to bypass her society's gender constraints" (199). Indeed, Agatha Verrall acts as a Crystal without a flaw. She is a telepathic healer who possesses a gift that enables her to cure people with psychosis: "she had whatever it was, the power, the uncanny, unaccountable gift" ("Flaw" 60). In a psychological reading, Agatha serves as a defence mechanism for her patients in the sense that her telepathic powers enable her to sublimate the source of psychosis into an accepted act by making the individual "supernaturally safe" ("Flaw" 67). We learn from the starting page that she is in a relationship with a married man named Rodney Lanyon. Rodney is married to Bella who exhibits symptoms of mental instability; thus, Agatha cures her using her telepathic gift

and Bella's condition becomes better consequently. For fear of losing Rodney, Agatha wonders whether she could use her supernatural power to make him come to her. However, given the uncanny nature of her power, she demonstrates a sense of fear towards possessing it:

She was beginning to see more and more how it worked; how inevitably, how infallibly it worked. She was even afraid of it, of what it might come to mean. It *did* mean that without his knowledge, separated as they were and had to be, she could always get at him.

And supposing it came to mean that she could get at him to make him do things? Why, the bare idea of it was horrible. ("Flaw" 60)

Agatha's power can be symbolic of the newly gained power of many Edwardian women who are unmarried and educated and who have been using the growing educational and career opportunities during this period. This passage demonstrates Agatha's fear of having this power that could manipulate Rodney. She sees that the idea of controlling him as "horrible". In view of women's position in the Edwardian period, her fear can be interpreted as part of women's fear over competing with men for posts in areas like "overseas trade, increased government services and health and education facilities provided work in commerce, the civil service, medicine and education" (Buckley 136). The way she considers the idea of controlling Rodney as horrible hints at her plausible fear of being in a leading position as far as gender roles are concerned. This fear can be said to be a product of guilt at the prospect of taking the man's position and controlling him. Agatha's supernatural power here signifies the temporary practical power that women achieved in this period of the 1910s. This supernatural power is both a strength and weakness. It is a strength because it offers its owner a privileged position for it remains beyond the knowledge of the natural order of things. At the same time, it is considered a weakness

because of the feeling of guilt that it entails and which grows out of the fear of having this unknown power.

Instead of using her power to control people, Agatha applies it for healing them. As the story unfolds, Agatha agrees to heal a male character who suffers from mental illness. She meets a couple, Harding and Milly Powell who move to her neighbourhood and she befriends them. In seeking help, Milly approaches her to do something for her sick husband Harding. Although she does not know about the secret power of Agatha, Milly believes there is some sort of mental peace being near her: “Milly didn’t know what it was, but she felt it- an influence, or something that made for mental peace” (“Flaw” 68). Agatha agrees and decides to use her supernatural power to heal Harding.

In fact, Sinclair had always believed in the powers of psychology. This is evidenced in her thoughts stated in *A Defence of Idealism* (1917) where she writes that: “we have authentic evidence bearing on the existence of a fairly extensive borderland, lying between Magic and Mysticism - the region of the so called 'psychic powers'... that there are 'powers', some powers, is, I think, no longer in dispute” (260-261). This allows a link with this short story. The beauty of the power that she referred to in her statement in *Defence* is detected in “Flaw” in the way that it “would make them safe, absolutely safe. She had only got to apply it to that thought of his, and the thought would not exist” (“Flaw” 65). In psychoanalytical terms, through her act of transferring thoughts to Harding’s mind, she is, in fact, transferring her ego’s defence mechanisms. This implies that she becomes his alter ego and thereby puts her sublimation mechanism to work for his benefit. Sublimation in psychology means transforming an unwanted act or impulses into something creative or accepted by society. Agatha then transfers the negative image of Harding into an image of the sane man expected by society. In her *Defence*, Sinclair writes:

All sublimation is a turning and passing of desire from a less worthy or less fitting object to fix it on one more worthy or more fitting. In the healthy individual there is no more danger in this turning and passing than in the transition from infantile baldness to a head of hair. But for the neurotic every turning, every passage, bristles with conflict and disturbance... (*Defence* 6-7).

Agatha, in this sense, acts as Harding's protective factor and through sublimation she restores the image of this shattered man to normality. This is performed through telepathy, a practice which came into existence in 1880 and has persisted up the twentieth century (Luckhurst 1). It was absorbed by Sinclair who always believed in the power of the mind which she stated in one of her letters:

Now, psychologically, desire, conscious or "sub-conscious," if it be strong enough, is the most purposeful and designing thing in the universe. Dream-analysis gives us some idea of the extraordinary power the psyche has of elaborating and designing its material according to its desire (67)

Her use of telepathy for healing, adding the supernatural element of the Gothic, confirms this communal interest in the psychic power and the supernatural. The rise of the phenomenon of telepathy coincided with the Gothic revival of the *fin de siècle*. In bringing these elements together, Sinclair is enabled to recognize the fact that "individuals are limited and even trapped by the system they embrace gives her characters depth and complexity" (Johnson 119). This entrapment is, indeed, displayed in Harding whose terrified eyes looked: "dark like an animal's, were the eyes of a terrified thing, a thing hunted and on the watch, a thing listened continually for the soft feet of the hunter ("Flaw" 70). Harding is pictured as someone who is psychologically insecure and trapped by his fears. Agatha remarks as she arrives to the Powell's place: "the blinds, the ugly, ochreish

yellow blinds, were down in all the nine windows of the front, the windows of the Powell's rooms. The house was like a house of the dead" ("Flaw" 59). This shows the sense of imprisonment that Harding experiences as he seems to be victim to an unknown threat that he does not even leave his house. Harding "apologised for the darkness in which they found him" ("Flaw" 70). His vulnerable position, I argue, foretells the status that many men come to occupy during the Great War years. His apology, indeed, is an apology for his vulnerability that compels him to live in darkness. As part of his mental illness, Harding suffers from sleeping problems. As Agatha starts healing him:

And then it was as if she drew him by intangible, supersensible threads; she touched, with no sense of peril, his innermost essence; the walls of flesh were down between them; she had got at him.

And having got at him she held him, a bloodless spirit, a bodiless essence, in the fount of healing. She said to herself, 'He will sleep now, He will sleep. He will sleep.' And as she slid into her own sleep she held and drew him with her. ("Flaw" 75)

Through Agatha's telepathic healing in this passage, she is enabled to operate through his mind and make him sleep. He improves consequently. The next morning, she remarks that "the blinds were up; the doors and windows were flung open" ("Flaw" 75). Yet, it occurs that Harding's recovery is only achieved at the condition of Agatha losing her power. This means that in the process of healing him, some degree of her power has been passed to Harding. He becomes dependent on her and this dependence proves to be dangerous. Indeed, Agatha enters a psychic battle with Harding, for he threatens to take control over her mind. In other words, her power is being absorbed by Harding: "And every night of that week, in those 'states' of hers, Powell predominated. He was becoming almost a visible presence impressed upon the blackness of the 'state'" ("Flaw" 84).

It can be suggested that this psychological battle between Agatha and Harding is metaphorical of the battle that the woman undergoes in trying to preserve her power in the pre-war period: “She knew, she knew what was happening. It was as if the walls of personality were wearing thin, and through them she felt him trying to get at her” (“Flaw” 93). Agatha refrains from healing him when “her gift, her secret, was powerless now against the pursuer. (“Flaw” 97). Therefore, while she has been trying to heal his madness, it has turned to her: “It was not her own madness that possessed her. It was, or rather, it had been, Harding Powell’s; she had taken it from him. That was what it meant to take away madness” (“Flaw” 97). After a desperate fight with Harding: “The second night *she* gained. She felt that she had built up her walls again; that she had cut Harding off” (“Flaw” 99). This implies that to preserve her power, Agatha has to abandon him because he has challenged her autonomy and power.

It is asserted by Helen Sword that many scholars “portray spirit mediumship as a self-empowering strategy enacted by specific oppressed or disenfranchised social groups” (3). Following Sword, it can be said that Sinclair uses such supernatural power as a tool for women to bypass the gender challenges of their time. According to Liggins, “Sinclair’s narrators are often female outsiders such as spinsters and mistresses, who validate their own oddity or power through their uncanny capacity to see, hear or feel what others cannot” (“Beyond” 44). This uncanny power, however, is not stable and often becomes undermined by the male “pursuer” (“Flaw” 98). Relying on the mysterious phenomenon of telepathy and the supernatural, Sinclair draws upon the psychological battle between Agatha and Harding that has a symbolic significance to women’s temporary power during the 1910s and which appears to be under constant threat to be usurped from them by the endangered masculinity.

Sinclair shows another dimension of women's battle of preserving her freedom in her short story, "Where the Fire is not Quenched" which was published a decade later in 1922. The story delineates the way the female character refuses the idea of marriage for fear of losing her freedom. She finds herself, however, trapped in the uncanny world of the afterlife. Sinclair has always supported feminist views and considered the Brontës as her ideals. Raitt points out:

Sinclair stresses that the sisters and their heroines were pioneers of modern femininity [...] The Brontës and their creations represented the constructive possibilities of the kind of resistant Victorian woman May Sinclair herself had been. The "modern heroine" is associated in Sinclair's mind with a rebelliously analytic spirit who refuses to submit to masculine control (117).

"Quenched" validates this female refusal "to submit to masculine control". The story centres around a woman named Harriot Leigh and her refusal to "submit to masculine control" only to become subject to an eternal confinement. The story begins with Harriot Leigh rejecting a marriage proposal from a man called George Waring because she is too young to marry him. After this, she engages in a relationship with a married man named Oscar Wade. Although she loves him, she seems to be horrified at the idea of marrying him. When Oscar's wife falls ill, Harriot expresses a terror at the possibility of her death, for it will free the way for them to get married. She asks herself: "would I marry *him*? Marriage would be the Hotel Saint Pierre all over again, without any possibility of escape." ("Quenched" 33). Earlier in the story and in a Paris trip with Oscar, Harriot stays in this hotel where "she had cried of pure boredom" ("Quenched" 32). Since then, the hotel of Saint Pierre has been a source of terror to her as "it was too hideously ugly; it was getting in her nerves" ("Quenched" 32). This trip permits the couple an opportunity to be alone and to be away from Oscar's family. To Harriot, being alone with Oscar for two weeks in

this hotel filled her with absolute boredom and discomfort. It is arguable that the unease that overwhelms Harriot in this hotel pictures the sort of life she might have in case she marries Oscar: “A terrible fear seized upon Harriot. Muriel might die of her pleurisy; and if Muriel died, she would have to marry Oscar” (“Quenched” 33).

This story was first published in 1922, a time when women were starting to escape their domesticated existence of the previous century. It shows the fact that despite winning some freedom, women are still confined during this period²⁵. As a supporter of women’s suffrage movement, Sinclair stands against the ideology of domesticity. She projects it in “Quenched” as a form of an eternal confinement which keeps repeating itself despite the attempt of supressing it. To explain, this short story shows the anxieties of the ephemerality of this power under the threat of patriarchy as well as women’s fears of the return to the Victorian confining life which still persists in the twentieth century. This is seen in the way the writer centralises the story events in the afterlife. Oscar dies first early in the story and “his death was an immense relief to Harriot” (“Quenched” 35). The fear of marriage entrapment is discerned after Harriot dies. She then meets Oscar’s ghost in the afterlife. The imagery of the afterlife as a space of terror can be symbolic of the bleak vision of the future as far as women’s place is concerned. At this point and after her death, Harriot wakes up in a church:

²⁵ Historically, the women’s movement started taking place in 1866 as the first suffrage organization was constituted in Manchester (Fulford 40). Besides, Women’ Social and Political Union (WSPU) was founded by Emmeline Pankhurst in Manchester only to move to London by 1906. Their efforts to obtain a parliamentary vote were constantly contained by the government until the outbreak of the First World War where their efforts were recognized ultimately and they eventually were granted the right to vote by 1918. Keith Curry Lance contends that the suffragette’s aim was finally achieved because of two crucial events which are “The defeat of the third conciliation bill in 1912 and Britain’s entry into the First World War” (25).

She bent her head back, peering, short-sightedly, and found herself looking into Oscar Wade's face.

He stood still, horribly still, and close, barring her passage.

She drew back; his heaving shoulders followed her. He leaned forward, covering her with his eyes. She opened her mouth to scream and no sound came.

She was afraid to move lest he should move with her. The heaving of his shoulders terrified her.

One by one the lights in the side aisles were going out. The lights in the middle aisle would go next. They had gone. If she didn't get away she would be shut up with him there, in the appalling darkness. ("Quenched" 38).

This shows how the fear of entrapment that she has suppressed in her lifetime returns to haunt her in the afterlife. Unaware of her own death, as she wakes up she assumes that it is a mere apparition of him: "When she looked back, Oscar Wade was not there. Then she remembered that Oscar was dead. Therefore, what she has seen was not Oscar; it was his ghost. He was dead; dead seventeen years ago. She was safe from him forever" ("Quenched" 38). Oscar explains to her that they are both in hell. She then attempts to escape from the church, which is haunted by Oscar.

The position of Harriot in the haunted church replays the formula of the eighteenth-century Gothic Romances where the heroine is imprisoned in a dungeon of a castle, convent or monasteries such as Radcliffe's heroine Adeline of *Romance of the Forest* (1791) who was imprisoned in a convent by the male villain. Similarly, the Gothic female character Agnes in Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) is also imprisoned in a dungeon of a convent as a punishment for her sexual transgression and getting pregnant. The replicate traditional Gothic plot in "Quenched" gives a direct reflection of women's condition in modern times

where the woman is under risk of reliving the domestic imprisonment that her ancestors endured in the past. As Harriot realises that she is dead and that she will be trapped with Oscar forever, she attempts to escape:

She turned and ran; her knees gave way under her; she sank and ran on, down the long grey corridors and the stairs, quick and blind, a hunted beast seeking for cover, hearing his feet coming after her.

The revolving doors caught her and pushed her out into the street.
(“Quenched” 39).

Harriot’s escape from Oscar in the afterlife, in this view, reflects modern women’s attempt to escape the institution of marriage after the Great War that the society sought to re-establish. Virginia Woolf pointed out, in *Three Guineas* (1938), that after the Great War, marriage was the only profession open to women (6). Linett adds that the escape that women were allowed during the Great War is temporary because many women had to abandon their new jobs to make way to men returning to claim their workplace (87). The temporary gained power from the Great War is shown in the way Harriot remains trapped despite her attempts to evade the church:

She stood at the gate, looking up and down the road, not knowing by which way she must go to escape Oscar.

[...] It was over she had got away, she was going back, back, to the green drive of the Park, between the beech trees, where Oscar had never been, where he would never find her. When she passed through the south gate her memory became suddenly young and clean.

[...] As she went along the field-path through the long field-path she had seen him. But the man who stood waiting for her under the elder tree was Oscar Wade.

“I told you it’s no use getting away, Harriot. Every path brings you back to me at every turn.” [...] “I am in all your memories.” (“Quenched” 40-43).

As seen from these passages, Harriot becomes subject to eternal repetitions of memories related to her previous life. The repressed idea of marriage, which is synonymous with submitting herself to masculine control in her life phase, returns to be more frightening in the afterlife. These frightening repetitions as occur in Oscar’s statement “Every path brings you back to me” can be explained through Freud’s theory of “The Uncanny”. The uncanny, Royle argues, is “ghostly” (1). It is ghostly in the sense that it is “indissociably bound up with a sense of repetition or ‘coming back’ – the return of the repressed, the constant or eternal recurrence of the same thing, a compulsion to repeat” (Royle 2). This has its origins in the Gothic story of E.T.A Hoffmann’s “The Sand-Man” (1816) which Freud relied on to explain his theory of the uncanny. The story, as such, centres on the motif of the return of childhood memories of a student named Nathaniel. These memories are concerned with the figure of the sandman who tears out children’s eyes and whose figure keeps returning to Nathaniel as he grows up (“Uncanny” 137). The theory then derives from this concept of the constant return of unwanted memories. Freud explains that nothing disappears in the human psyche and all that is repressed has the power to return and haunt the individual (“Uncanny” 135-36). In line with this, in her lifetime, although she has loved Oscar, she found the idea of marrying him and the doubts related to it as terrifying: “But if she wouldn’t marry him, was she in love with him? That was the test. Perhaps it was a good thing he wasn’t free. Then she told herself that these doubts were morbid, and that the question wouldn’t arise.” (“Quenched” 33). In the post death phase, Oscar explains that he will always be in her memories. What she has repressed in her life returns as repeated sketches that remind her that she is haunted by Oscar. After her unfruitful attempts to escape from Oscar, Harriot ends up trapped in a room with him with no other way to escape.

Therefore, she opts for escaping through memories. As she leaves the room to walk along the garden:

she said to herself then that she was safe. She had gone back so far that she was a child again; she had the blank innocence of childhood. To be a child, to go small under the heads of the lupins, to be blank and innocent, without memory, was to be safe [...]

She had got back to the farthest memory of all; there was nothing beyond it. There would be an iron gate in the wall of the orchard. It would lead into a field.

Something was different here, something that frightened her. An ash-grey door instead of an iron gate. [...]

She pushed it open and came into the last corridor of the Hotel Saint Pierre.
(“Quenched” 45)

Her memories, as pictured in the first passage, take her to a time free of any possible encounters with Oscar. As she goes deeper in her memories, she reaches an impasse that blocks any further escape endeavours. Her walk leads her to the “last corridor of Hotel Saint Pierre”. This hotel can be said to symbolise her fear of marriage that she has always dreaded. By the end of the story, Harriot’s flight from the ghost of Oscar leads her to this hotel, which anticipates modern women’s eternal struggle to achieve independence. The hotel of Saint Pierre signifies a dead end for the women’s movement as women were continuously enforced to undertake their traditional roles of marriage and motherhood after the First World War. Harriot delineates two acts of rebellion, as Drewery states, “not following the expected course of marriage and motherhood, and later having an affair with a man whom she does not love” (77). Despite her acts of rebellion, her post-death experience reveals the horror behind the uncertainty of the future in regard to the peculiar position of the early twentieth-century woman.

As seen in “Flaw” and “Quenched”, the writer deals with contemporary themes of her time that seem to be complex to position, particularly women’s power, which threatens to vanish as shown in “Flaw” and the modern woman’s fear to live in confinement in case she submits to the male as presented in “Quenched”. This is expressed further through the ghostly and the supernatural in *The Romantic* and *The Tree of Heaven*. In this sense, these two texts will be studied as a continuity to the short stories discussed here, for they build on the thematic concerns of women’s temporary power and their struggle of preserving it against the perpetual danger of being subject to usurpation by their male counterparts. More importantly, is the way the Gothic transitions between Sinclair’s short stories and her longer fiction. Because the Gothic “transgresses genre and boundaries” (Botting 4), Sinclair develops a Gothic approach in her war fiction; one that differs from the one found in her short stories. The Gothic approach here is not straightforwardly apparent as it is in her *Uncanny Stories*. This means no actual ghosts are necessarily involved, yet an intangible mode of the Gothic that is metaphorical to some degree, emerges in response to feminine anxieties about their position, this time within the context of the First World War. In this view, Peeren argues that the ghosts of the twentieth century undergo a specific metamorphosis and take the status of “an analytical tool as *does* theory” (1). Both of these novels focus on women as carers for the First World War’s shattered man. While they perform their role of healing, they find themselves subject to vampiric usurpation of their temporary gained freedom in the way that they act as spiritualist mothers to the wounded men around them.

The Tree of Heaven chronicles the life and changing times of an upper class English family. The timeline of the story falls between the Boer War (1899-1902) and World War One (1914-1918). The Harrison family consists of various children of differing temperaments, as well as an extended family of spinsterish sisters, adulterers and drunks.

The children become involved in various issues of the day, such as the Suffrage movement, Irish Home Rule and labour strikes.

In this section, I will focus on the female character Veronica and the spectral machinations related to her. I argue that Veronica's mysterious power allows Sinclair to give voice to women who are distanced from the war like herself after having lived a short experience near the site of war²⁶. Her biographer Suzanne Raitt states that Sinclair dealt with the disappointment of being removed from the war by writing about it (149). Developing a Gothic approach in her war fiction, as such, gives a way to Sinclair to reinsert her lost opportunity of being in close contact with the wounded. Her female character Veronica performs her war aid in a supernatural manner. Angela K Smith argues that "Sinclair focuses on the Harrison children as agents for the modern; Dorothea in the Women's Movement, Michael as a poet and Nicky as an envoy for technological advancement" (136). It can be added that the character of Veronica as a female medium also acts as an agent for the modern. Although not a Harrison child, Veronica has been raised by the Harrison's family. She is a remarkable character, for the secret power she possesses as it becomes crucial to bringing relief to this family's members to help them cope with the losses caused by the war. Johnson, in this view, points out that "English culture became one of mass bereavement and mourning, was under extreme duress and harboured enormous anxiety about the fate of combatants, the threat from its adversaries,

²⁶ Sinclair participated in war aid as "a secretary, stretcher-bearer, nurse, correspondent, and fund-raiser" (Johnson 107). She has been sent back to England after three weeks of her involvement, perhaps because she tried to act independently from her orders (Johnson 107). Raitt also remarks that "on 25 September 1914 she went out to the front in Belgium with an ambulance unit. Two and a half weeks later she was ordered to go back to England, ostensibly to collect more funds, and then was told that the unit had no further use for her" (149).

and the future of its nation” (7). The events of the novel mirror such bereavement as lived by the Harrisons family as their children get eventually killed in the battlefield. The theme of loss is central to the last part of the novel entitled “Victory” which chronicles the fear and horrors of the war through letters sent home from the front by the Harrison children and which will be the focus of this chapter.

Veronica is an unwanted child who has had “no peace or quietness or security in her little life of eleven years” (*Tree* 127). She was taken to be raised by Frances Harrison after her mother has abandoned her to marry another man: “She seemed to have spent most of her time in being turned out of one room because her mother wanted to be alone in it with Ferdie” (*Tree* 128). She develops mystical powers as she grows up. Her sister Dorothea in a discussion with her mother says:

And yet Veronica knew what you were feeling and what you were thinking, and what you were going to do, and what was happening to you. (She had really known, in Dresden what was happening to Nicky when Desmond made him marry her.) It was as if in her the walls that divide every soul from every other soul were made of some thin and porous stuff that let things through. And in this life of yours, for the moments that she shared it, she lived intensely, with uncanny delight and pain that were her own and not her own (*Tree* 324-325)

This shows that Veronica’s secret power allows her to penetrate into thoughts of others and to connect with the souls. According to this passage, her power can be said to be linked to a form of mysticism. Mysticism is defined according to Oxford dictionary as the “Belief in union with the divine nature by means of ecstatic contemplation, and belief in the power of spiritual access to ultimate reality, or to domains of knowledge closed off to ordinary thought. Also, applied derogatorily to theories that assume occult qualities or agencies of which no empirical or rational account can be offered.” (“Mysticism”, *Oxford* def.1). It is

considered part of spiritualism; Johnson points out that it has always been a peculiar term and defines it as: “an experience of the spiritual life, more particularly the achievement of union or atonement with God” (4). Mysticism, hence, is a form of spiritualism that permits a union with the unseen. Although Veronica’s power is likely to be mystic, it remains unidentified in the novel. Veronica herself seems to be unaware of the nature of her power. She explains to Nicky:

“I don’t know. I don’t know what it is now; I only know what it does. It always happens –always – when you want it awfully. And when you’re quiet and give yourself up to it.”

“It will happen again”

He listened, frowning a little, not quite at ease, not quite interested’ puzzled, as if he had lost her trail; put off. As if something had come between him and her.

“You can make it to other people,” she was saying; “so that when things get too awful they can bear them. I wanted it to happen to Dorothy when she was in prison, and it did. She said she was absolutely happy there; and that all sorts of queer things came to her. And, Nicky, they were the same queer things that came to me. It was like something getting through to her.” (*Tree* 451).

The mysterious nature of this power is also treated in the same manner in her *Defence* where Sinclair similarly and repeatedly refers to it by the pronoun “It”:

There is a dubious borderland: the region of the so-called supernatural powers, of which the mystic himself cannot say whether they are magical or spiritual: the power of healing, of vision, of clairvoyance and clairsaudience, of control over matter. This is the region where 'miracles' are said to happen; though neither the believer in magic

nor the mystic know what is really happening. "It," whatever "it" is, happens in the East and West wherever magic and mysticism are known and practised. (*Defence* 250)

This coheres with Royle's explanation of the uncanny that "it might arise from the seemingly mechanical repetition of a word, such as 'it'" (1). Veronica's power in this sense is "uncanny" because "it involves feelings of uncertainty" (Royle 1). This power evokes fascination and fear, meaning that its ambiguity is, in a way, linked to the uncertain power that women of the early twentieth century began to grasp: "no previous war had given women the opportunity for the degree of involvement that they were to experience in the First World War" (Smith 7). This power is expressed by Sinclair as ghostly:

And yet [Veronica] was aware of something else that was not happiness. It was not a thing you could name or understand, or seize, or see; you were simply aware of it, as you were aware of ghosts in your room at night. Like the ghosts, it was not always there; but when it was there you knew (*Tree* 13).

While she can seize it, Veronica uses it in helping others. Johnson points out that "she develops a psychic, telepathic power, both taking on the suffering of others – in object relational terms, "introjecting" their bad objects – and telepathically healing others" (92). Effectively, she transfers some of it to Dorothea when she was jailed because of her political activism in the Suffragette movement prior to the war. In a dialogue with her mother, Dorothea reflects:

"Mother – how do we know she isn't right? Nicky said she was. And Michael said Nicky was right. If it had been only Nicky – he might have got it from Veronica. But Michael never got things from anybody. And you do know things in queer ways. Even I do. At least I did once – when I was in prison. I knew something tremendous

was going to happen. I saw it, or felt it, or something [...] It was as if I'd seen that he and Lawrence and Nicky and Michael and all of them would die in it to save the whole world. Like Christ, only that they really did die and the whole world was saved. There was nothing futile about it". (*Tree* 492)

Veronica's secret power allows Dorothea to have a spiritualist vision of the war before its outbreak. Although she could foresee the tremendous event of the war taking place, her visions were positive in the way that she comes to realise that self-sacrifice becomes necessary for saving the whole world. The vision of her brothers dying in the war is hence enlightened by the "spiritual benefits of war" (Tylee 133). The momentary flashes that Dorothea sees involve a "secret encounter" (Royle 2) with a form of otherness and this per se characterises Gothic dimensions. Veronica's ability to see ghosts when she was young: "Well – there are ghosts. I saw one last night" (*Tree* 132), evolves to include psychic powers that not only enable her to encounter the unseen but also to use it for the sake of transforming the pain of her family to moments of happiness and ecstasy. Nicky describes such moments when he is in the trenches, expressed in one of his war letters sent home to Veronica:

Well – I tried ages ago to tell Dorothy what it was like. It's been like that every time (except that I've got over the queer funky feeling half-way through). It'll be like that again next time, I know. Because now I've tested it. And, Ronny – I couldn't tell Dorothy this, because she'd think it was all rot – but when you're up first out of the trench and stand alone on the parapet, it's absolute happiness. (*Tree* 466)

Veronica helps Nicky overcome the fear of the trench warfare, in that, its horrors transform to an experience of "absolute happiness". Paul Fussell describes the torturing state of the trenches as filled with "dead horses and dead men – and parts of both – were sometimes not buried for months and often simply became an element of parapets and trench walls.

You could smell the front line miles before you could see it” (49). Sinclair seems to provide a romantic vision of the war experience. This is realised through a female medium whose secret power enables her to connect with the minds of her loved ones and as such releases the “queer funky feeling” they endure in the war site. Nicky adds “P.S.-I wish you’d try to get some notion of it into Dad and Dorothy and Mother. It would save them half the misery they’re probably going through” (*Tree* 500). Unaware of the nature of her power, Nicky acknowledges the sense of relief and comfort it brings to the individual. Indeed, before he dies, his last wish was that Veronica transfers some of her power to his family so that it helps them grapple with the pain of his loss.

Michael, Nicky’s brother, decides to enlist for the war after trying to avoid it because “He funk’d it so badly that he would really rather die than go through with it” (*Tree* 519-20). In one of his letters sent home to Veronica, he describes his feelings as he has been in the trenches:

But suppose it is your nerves. Why should they tingle at just that particular moment, the moment that makes *animals* afraid? Why should you be so extraordinarily happy? Why should the moment of extreme danger be always the "exquisite" moment? Why not the moment of safety? [...] Another thing – it always comes with that little shock of recognition. It’s happened before, and when you get near to it again you know what it is. You keep on wanting to get near it, wanting it to happen again. You may lose it the next minure, but you know. Lawrence knew what it was. Nicky knew. (*Tree* 503-504)

Like Nicky, Michael’s fear turns into moments of happiness. Significantly, Veronica manages once again to transform the instants of danger to ecstasy through telepathically transferring her mysterious power to Michael. Johnson states, in support of this, that “Veronica transcends the pain of death” (92). Telepathy is not strictly a Gothic

phenomenon as it moves between genre and contexts. Yet, it remains linkable to the Gothic because it is bound to the supernatural and the unseen which is capable of arousing terror within the individual. The concept has been coined by Frederic Myers in 1882, who defines it as “the passage of thought and emotion from one mind to another without sensory aid” (25). Telepathy was one of the most debated concepts in the Society of Psychical Research. The debate within the SPR centres on the idea of whether telepathy is bound up to psychoanalysis. The concept has been rejected by some of the SPR members who refuse to link it with psychoanalysis mainly because of its association with the occult²⁷. Sinclair in her *Defence* explains telepathy as:

For the most elementary power of telepathy and suggestion (Which, I believe, include all the others) is, if you come to think of it, a very remarkable and significant thing; almost as remarkable and significant as dreaming. It means that the ordinary methods of communication by speech and sign are “transcended” (266)

Jan Campbell and Steve Pile argue that telepathy should be linked to psychoanalysis because it reveals certain truths about the unconscious life (408). In relation to this, Stephen Frosh argues that telepathy is as a result connected to repression as a fundamental coupling (106). In line with this, Sinclair’s apparent fascination with telepathy leads us to argue that Veronica’s act of thought transference, in addition to easing the pain of others, offers a

²⁷ Frosh points out that Ernest Jones, one of Freud’s colleagues, was concerned that psychoanalysis would be affected if it is too attached with the occult phenomena (Frosh 93-94). Freud himself was hesitant in regard to the belief in telepathy and he only admitted his conversion to the concept in 1926 (Royle 364). Roger Luckhurst says: “What telepathy names—that is, forms of occult relation or communication between people at distance” (1).

representation of repressed desires within her unconscious. Having been distanced from being directly involved in the war, Sinclair continues to express her frustration of not being able to experience the excitement of the war (Smith *Second* 48). In this view, it can be argued that Veronica's character mirrors the writer's repressed desires concerning physical participation in the war. Therefore, the moments of happiness that both Nicky and Michael have experienced are representations of Veronica's repressed desire of taking part in the war. Campbell and Pile note that the repressed returns and gets transported; telepathy they say: "is in every sense a symptom of the repressed: like the hysterical symptom, it carries and transports what cannot be consciously spoken or represented" (418). Therefore, whereas Veronica contributes to the war through appeasing the torments that Nicky and Michael endure while in the trenches, the positive experience they feel is also a representation of Veronica's hidden desires.

It is arguable in this light that Veronica's mysterious power is a subtle device of the Gothic through which the writer is enabled to highlight women's input to the war. This is realised through the emerging elements of telepathy and connecting with the unseen. Its unfamiliarity is both eerie and exciting for its possessor Veronica and the people involved with it. Although complex to understand, its efficacy is recognized in terms of bringing comfort from inside the war zone as she spiritually helps Nicky and Michael as well as outside it in the sense that she brings comfort to the home space. This is made clear as she engages in spirit communication with Nicky after he dies, helping his mother to encounter his soul:

It was quiet in the garden, so that, when her moment came, Veronica could time it by the striking of the clock head through the open doorway of the house: four strokes; and the half-hour; and then, almost on the stroke, her rush of pure, mysterious happiness [...] she turned to nod and smile at Frances who was coming through the

door with her basket, and it was then that she saw Nicholas. He stood on something that looked like a low wall, raised between her and the ash-tree; he stood motionless, as if arrested in the act of looking back to see if she were following him. His eyes shone, vivid and blue, as they always shone when he was happy. He smiled at her, but with no movement of his mouth. He shouted to her, but with no sound [...] she has started forwards to go to him when tree thrust itself between them, and he was gone. (*Tree* 501)

This passage shows another facet of her supernatural power. As her moment comes, Veronica could have flashes of Nicky's ghost. The ghost disappears as she starts moving towards its direction. This passage shows an example of spirit communication after the war as a way to cope with the bereavement of the war. Sword argues: "the paradoxical practice of mourning the dead by refusing to let them die itself took a fresh lease on life, as millions of new clients flocked to spirit mediums in hopes of making contact with their dead" (3). The apparition of Nicky demonstrates a sense of happiness as seen in the depiction of his eyes looking "as they always shone when he was happy". This shows further the way the writer seems to celebrate patriotism and glory of self-sacrifice that can be seen in the happy allure of Nicky's ghost. In fact, Sinclair herself was a practitioner of spiritualism as she has attended séances where she could make contact with her dead brother Frank:

I was very anxious to get proof of the [spirits'] presence, something that cd.n't be explained away as yr. or my subconsciousness. So, on Wednesday night I called Frank & asked if he cd. Show a light in my room in a place where it cd.n't come from the outside. Nothing happened on Wednesday night but last night I'd no sooner called to Frank when a bright rod of light appeared, intensely pulsating, with a steady light below, in the very place I had asked for. It remained some time. (qtd in Raitt 134)

It is of no surprise, hence, to come across themes of mysticism presented as central to her works. The focus of Veronica as a female medium and a mystic healer in *Tree* can be highlighted as women's contribution to the war. Veronica was rejected from participating in war aid because "she was not strong enough to nurse in the hospitals" (*Tree* 190). Her character, nevertheless, projects her strength from another dimension. Despite her physical vulnerability, Veronica mirrors the case of many women who have been deemed unfit to take part in the war aid but still contributed from the home space through acting as spiritualist healers. Sword comments that many scholars represent spirit mediumship "as a self-empowering strategy enacted by specific oppressed or disenfranchised social groups" (3). In her diary, Sinclair wrote her impressions of her brief experience with a volunteer ambulance corps at the battlefield in *A Journal of Impressions in Belgium* (1915). It focuses on her ideas of the idealistic romance of the war as she also expresses her dissatisfaction about her vulnerable position of being a woman which prevents her from experiencing the romanticism of the war (Smith *Second* 48). Her belief in elements of thought transference and contacting the dead can be explained as her way of reasserting the heroic image of those women who did not have the chance to be at the battlefield. The way Veronica transfers her supernatural power to ease Nicky's fear while in the trenches highlights such women's plausible contribution in the war. Sinclair also draws attention to the fact that this power is not long lasting. Veronica's character is similar to that of Agatha in "Flaw" as they both use their supernatural power as a healing device. While Agatha's power gets challenged by her male patient Harding, Veronica's power is also challenged by Frances, who having raised her, acts like a mother to her. When Frances realises the secret power of Veronica, she begins to feel envy and jealousy that she even tries to take it from her:

She clung to Veronica and was jealous of her. Veronica had not come between her and Nicky as long as he was alive, but now that he was dead she came between them. She came between her and Michael too. Michael's mind has always been beyond her; she could only reach it through Veronica and through Veronica's secret. Her mind clutched at Veronica's secret, and flung it away as useless, and returned, clutching at it again [...] It was as if Veronica held the souls of Michael and Nicholas in her hands. She offered her the souls of her dead sons. She was the mediator between her and their souls (*Tree* 547)

Frances's character is an archetype of the Victorian mother. Indeed, Smith in *Second* remarks that she represents "a perfect expression of Victorian/Edwardian motherhood, dutifully loving her sons above all things" (136). This passage reveals a sense of clash between Frances and Veronica. Her jealousy of Veronica's power of mediumship can be interpreted as symptomatic of her desire to have Veronica's power. This uncanny power is a fantasised vision of women's quested power in the early twentieth century. Frances's sense of envy reveals repressed desires of Victorian mothers who ensure the continuity of their values and in the same time are tempted by the modern woman's power. Suggesting that Veronica's supernatural power symbolises women's growing empowerment in the 1914, Frances exemplifies the Victorian mother who is trapped in the Modernist period between her traditional codes and the temptation of having this power that her modern daughters have.

In her second war novel, *The Romantic*, Sinclair continues to highlight the threat of usurpation of women's power through the war. Whereas *Tree* focuses on the spiritualist power of women as part of their contribution to the war from the home space, *The Romantic* highlights the female character's undertaking of the physical experience of war aid and the way she struggles against the potential usurpation of her power from her male counterpart.

By physical experience, I mean being in close contact with the dead by working as an ambulance driver, which puts her in an almost equal footing of the male soldiers. While this is not a Gothic novel with the strict sense of the term, it encompasses Gothic undercurrents that are not directly visible to the reader as it takes shape “in terms of performativity” (Monnet and Hantke ii). It performs itself in this novel through the metaphorical imagery of vampirism which symbolises power usurpation from the female in the First World War that entails a sense of ambivalence in her.

This ambivalence is born from her recognition of the degenerate status of her partner as well as of the fact that her power is being sacrificed to redeem this masculinity in crisis. Similar to *Tree* where the materiality of Sinclair’s Gothic appears in a minimised degree but still functions to express feminine repressed desires, the Gothic is not straightforwardly adapted by the writer in *Romantic*. It is, instead, generated through its figurative discourse of vampirism and otherness that produce fear and ambivalence within the female subject. It can be noticeable that there is an emerging innovative use of the Gothic from her *Uncanny Stories* to the fiction that lies in her introducing of psychoanalytical elements that rather focus on the mental state of the characters. *The Romantic* delineates a form of a Gothic that rests in its metaphoric language of vampirism as Scott Brewster puts it: “[the Gothic] lives on through its re-readings, its ongoing capacity to generate interpretations within and beyond the academy” (309). This means that the Gothic is no longer limited to its classical conventions but metamorphoses across periods according to the writer’s necessities as well as in resonance with the arising cultural anxieties triggered by the Great War.

Romantic chronicles the journey of a couple, Charlotte Redhead and John Conway, who take an ambulance to Belgium to help the war effort during the retreat. On arrival, they meet with another group who are on the same mission. Charlotte is presented as a

courageous and enthusiastic woman whose first mission is to rescue Belgian soldiers under shellfire. Her partner John shows a romantic vision about taking part in the war and helping soldiers at the beginning of the novel. As the story unfolds, he starts to display a sort of cowardice when he comes face to face with death. Charlotte becomes a witness of his inner struggle to hide his cowardice despite her efforts to refuse such a reality. John himself denies his weakness and turns to bully Charlotte and also threatens to take her power. Consequently, Charlotte finds herself in an ambivalent position regarding the idea of sacrificing her power for the sake of saving the status of the man that is declining in the face of new fears. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar point out that the manhood of the soldier at the Front becomes assaulted and that “he was not man, an inhabitant of the inhuman new era and a citizen of the unpromising new land into which this war of wars had led him” (259). Significantly, whereas the character of John has not been directly involved with the fight, being in close contact with the dead reminds him of “the inhuman” new world which he risks being part of.

In *Romantic*, Sinclair highlights the helpless position of her female character as she comes face to face with the harsh realities of her new role that she has always longed for. Sinclair puts Charlotte at the heart of the theatre of the war from which she herself was removed²⁸. Charlotte’s enthusiasm about the war is revealed when she is asked by John about her feelings towards it; she says:

²⁸ Sinclair had been in few ambulance trips until she was pushed out from one of the ambulances with the excuse that she had taken a place of an injured soldier. Sinclair “found herself standing in the street as the ambulance roared away. So far, although she had been out with the ambulance three times, she had never been in danger or taken any central role in the rescue or the care of dying men. The following night she felt even more inept as she struggled to take care of a wounded British soldier in the hospital in Ghent. She was unable to lift him; she disturbed him with her continual coughing; she annoyed the doctors and nurses by

“I don’t think I’m feeling anything—except wanting to get there. And wanting—
— wanting frightfully —to help”. (*Romantic* 67)

“Unless you can go into it as if it was some tremendous, happy adventure —
That’s only one way to take it. I shouldn’t be any good if I didn’t feel it was the most
romantic thing that ever happened to me. ... To have let everything go, to know that
nothing matters, that it doesn’t matter if you’re killed, or mutilated ... Of course I
want to help, but that would be nothing without the gamble. The danger.” (*Romantic*
66-67).

Charlotte’s vision of the war as “a happy adventure” represents the desire of many women who wanted to experience the excitement of being thrown into danger. She pictures herself in the Western Front surrounded by “long lines of stretchers, wounded men and dead men on stretchers, passing and passing before her” (*Romantic* 60). Her enthusiasm proves to be a mere fantasy as she encounters the ugly realities of the war. In addition to the horrors of watching men die in front of her, Charlotte has a more dangerous scenario which is witnessing the changing behaviour of her partner John who begins to display signs of fear and cowardice on his first mission:

And by the side of each man the dust was stiffened into a red cake with a glairy pool
in the middle of it, fed from the raw wound; and where two men lay together their
pools had joined and overflowed in a thin red steam. (*Romantic* 100)

summoning them continually. The next morning she was removed from the case. Her brief career as nurse was over” (Raitt 157).

John put down his stretcher and stood still. His face was very white, and his upper lip showed indrawn and dry, and tightened as though it were glued with his teeth.

(Romantic 100)

The sight of the dead men drowning in pools of blood reminds John of the dehumanizing experience of the war. As such, the corpses remind him of his own death. Kristeva regards the corpse “seen without God and outside of science as the utmost of abjection” (4). The bodily fluid of the blood and the raw wounds show John what he “permanently thrust aside in order to live” (Kristeva 3). From loss to loss of these bodily wastes until nothing remains, John would turn to a corpse, an object without any borders to protect him. His fear consequently escalates until he abandons a wounded man in a house where he is supposed to rescue him. Charlotte, assisting a Belgian soldier and waiting for John to bring her the stretchers is shocked to see him flee the house:

Then she saw John come out of the door of the house and stand there, looking up and down the street. Once she saw him glance back over his shoulder at something behind him in the room. The same instant she heard the explosion and saw the shell burst in the middle of the street, not fifty yards from the ambulance. Half a minute after she saw John dash from the doorway and run, run at an incredible pace, towards his car. She heard him crank up the engine [...] The noise she heard was not the grating noise of a car backing, it was the scream of a car getting a way, it dropped to a heavy whirr and diminished *(Romantic 122)*

His renewed attempt to throw himself into danger to rescue the wounded fails as he escapes. Upon seeing a man coming out of the house “wounded, limping, his foot bound to a splint” *(Romantic 122)*, Charlotte becomes horrified at the thought of John’s deliberate act of abandoning the wounded soldier to die: “It didn't matter so much his forgetting her. The awful thing was his forgetting the wounded man. How could you forget a wounded man?”

(*Romantic* 125). John's act of escape emanates from his fear of meeting the same fate of the wounded Belgian soldier that he has left to die. This scene of John's fear reveals that the event of the war exacerbated the *fin de siècle* and Edwardian period's anxieties about the deterioration of English masculinity. The character of John embodies the cultural anxieties of male emasculation. His cowardly behaviour is soon recognized by some members of the other corps led by Dr McClane. Dr McClane has known John's weakness since the beginning and insists that Charlotte sends him away from Belgium so that she joins his corps instead. Charlotte refuses and chooses to stay by John's side; however, her efforts of protecting him start to drain her because the truth of his cowardice seems to haunt her:

She woke very early in the morning with one clear image in her mind: what John had done yesterday.

Her mind seemed to have watched all night behind her sleep to attack her with it in the first moment of waking [...] His funk wasn't like other people's funk. Coupled with his ecstatic love of danger as an unreal, fantastic thing. It had come too near her; it had moved her too profoundly and too long; she had shared it as she might have shared his passion.

So that, even in the sharp, waking day she felt his fear as a secret, mysterious thing. She couldn't account for it. (*Romantic* 161)

Parsons regards the voices of those women who worked alongside soldiers as lost voices who were also subject to traumatic symptoms (183). Charlotte's experience resonates with Parsons's view in the way that she shows symptoms of shock and fright at the scene of John's escape that haunts her. Given that Charlotte is a remarkable member in the field for her courage, John's revealing signs of effeminacy have a draining effect on her mind. She thinks: "But there was fear and fear. There was the cruel, animal fear of the Belgians in the

plantation, fear that was dark to itself and had no sadness in it; and there was John's fear that knew itself and was sad" (*Romantic* 162). The romantic vision of her role at the battlefield turns to a nightmare because of John's fear that has leaked to her. In fact, John's changing behaviour proves to be more dangerous in the way that he begins to look for other sources of power that help him conceal his degenerate side. This can be expressed through vampiric discourse in the way that he begins to absorb power from Charlotte because "VAMPIRES GO where power is" (Auerbach 6). This occurs in the sense that he takes Charlotte with him on his missions: "It was as if, in spite of his hostility, he still felt, as he had said, that where she was everything was all right" (*Romantic* 186). This is shown further in another episode where he secretly sends her to a dangerous place of "Zelev" for a mission that has been originally assigned for himself, using the excuse that he has to drive his comrade Trixie to "Ghent":

She knew. It was going to be dangerous and he fucked it. He hadn't got to drive Trixie into Ghent. When the worst came to the worst Trixie could drive herself. She thought: He didn't tell her because he daren't. He knew she wouldn't let him send me by myself. She'd *make* him go. She'd stand over him and bully him till he had to (*Romantic* 189-90)

Sending Charlotte to danger on his behalf not only unravels his cowardice but also the way he extorts power from her. The way he evades the orders to go to Zelev himself and sending Charlotte instead shows how he regards her as a shield behind which his cowardice can hide. The real pain that Charlotte faces is her knowing the truth that she can no longer deny. This truth of John's cowardice follows her like a ghost: "When she went out with him she felt that she is going with something dangerous and uncertain. She knew what fear was now" (*Romantic* 185). The greatest of fears she experiences during her job grow out of watching John's sense of effeminacy emerge. Sinclair here draws upon the real horrors of

war that women have to encounter as aid workers, and which remain silent horrors. Her courage and enthusiasm are gradually usurped by the masculinity in danger. Endangered masculinity can be conceived of as a form of otherness which at the same time exhibits vampiric undercurrents. Crucial to the vampire discourse is its relationship to otherness; Erik Butler comments that “the figure permits the representation of the foreignness within a recognizable framework – that is, the creature marks sites in the seemingly unified field” (2). Likewise, the vampire figure marks John’s deviation from the norm. This is clarified in Dr McClane’s conversation with Charlotte:

“He jumped at everything that helped him get compensation, to get power. He jumped at your feeling for him because it gave him power. He jumped at the war because the thrill he got out of it gave him the sense of power. He sucked manhood out of you. He sucked it out of everything –out of blood and wounds. . . . He’d have been faithful to you for ever, Charlotte, if you hadn’t found him out. *That* upset all his delicate adjustments. The war upset him. I think the sight of blood and wounds whipped up the naked savage in him.

[...] “He was afraid of himself. Of what was in him. That fear of his was his protection, like his fear of women. The war broke it down. Then he was cruel to you”
(*Romantic* 245-246)

Kunka also points out that Conway desperately attempts to compensate for his lack of courage (241). Although not with the strict meaning of blood sucking as it appears in the famous vampire novel *Dracula* (1897), the vampire figure still circulates in Modernist war literature to manifest the unspeakable realities of women’s experience in the war context. This vampire discourse in relation to the war has been hinted at by critics such as Terry Phillips who argues that the vampire of the First World War has a strong kinship with women instead: “the sudden incapacitating of men as wage earners allowed women to feed of men incapacity and become

themselves the breadwinners while the maiming and dying of countless men seemed to permit women to enjoy a vicarious heroism at their expense” (67). Nevertheless, Sinclair here shows a different reality that women’s newly gained power of being alongside soldiers at the Western Front was being sucked from them by endangered masculinities in the battlefield. Dr McClane says to Charlotte: “He wanted you – “frightfully” – all the time. He went to pieces if you weren’t there. Don’t you know why he took you out with him everywhere?” (*Romantic* 242). This aligns with Auerbach’s point that:

Vampires blend into the changing cultures they inhabit. They inhere in our most intimate relationships; they are also hideous invaders of the normal. I am writing about vampires because they can be everything we are, while at the same time, they are fearful reminders of the infinite things we are not. (6)

The vampire figure indeed blends itself into a culture changed by the catastrophe of the war that culminated the anxieties of the pre-war period regarding fear of degeneration of the English race. The vampiric nature of John, as such, invades “the normal” in the sense that his effeminacy disturbs the normalcy of Charlotte’s volunteering mission which she has long desired to perform. The workings of this vampiric invasion continue to leave traces after John’s death. What began as an attempt to rescue wounded soldiers, has shifted for the woman to sacrificing her power to conceal John’s cowardice by constantly defending him against the rest of the members of the corps and carrying his missions on his behalf. When John dies, she finds herself engaged in a new duty of redeeming his past image and fulfilling his unachieved goals of patriotism. This occurs in a conversation with her comrade Billy as he asks her to withdraw now that John is dead. She responds:

“More than ever now he’s dead. Even if I didn’t want to stay I should have to now. To make up”

“For what?”

“For what he did. All those awful things. And for what he didn’t do. His dreams. I’ve got to do what he dreamed. But more than anything I must pay his debt to Belgium. To all those wounded men.”

“You are not responsible for his debts, Charlotte.”

“No? Sometimes I feel as if I were. As if he and I were tied up together. I could get away from him when he was alive. But now he’s dead he’s got me.”

“It doesn’t make him different.”

“It makes me different. I tell you, I can’t get away from him. And I want to. I want to cut myself loose; and this is the way.” (*Romantic* 233)

John continues to absorb power from Charlotte even after death in the way that she is burdened with a responsibility to clear the image of the degenerate man and to release herself from its continuous haunting. The vampire, Phillips says, “is terrifying, not only as an uncomfortable reminder of the future disintegration of the human self but because s/he is a “revenant”. The revenant disrupts the boundaries between the living and the dead” (69). This means that the vampiric self of John returns in a ghostly form to haunt the living. Because ghosts return on a mission, John’s ghost returns with the aim to accomplish his unfinished business of experiencing the ecstasy of the war that he considers “the most romantic thing that ever happened . . .” (*Romantic* 67).

In her fictionalised record of her war experience collected in *A journal of Impressions in Belgium*, Sinclair’s narrator portrays signs of being haunted by some war scenes:

“Every night before I went to sleep I saw an interminable spectacle of horrors: trunks without heads, heads without trunks, limbs tangled in intestines, corpses by every roadside, murders, mutilations, my friends shot dead before my eyes. Nothing I shall ever see will be more ghastly than the things I have seen.” (7)

The point I am trying to make here is that *The Romantic* shows haunted female minds from another perspective. What haunts Charlotte is not the “trunks without heads” and “limbs tangled in intestines” because the image of the effeminate man has a stronger effect on her mind that continues to haunt her. This is to say that women in the battlefield had to experience another degree of trauma afterwards. These women’s trauma originates from the sight of the strength of men deteriorate. This recalls Mary Borden’s statement in her collection of essays *The Forbidden Zone* (1929) about the experience of female nurses in wartime where she asks: There are “no men; so how could I be a woman?” (*Forbidden* 44). Parsons argues that in the battlefield the nurses are psychologically deadened at the sight of dead bodies of men around them; they become united with the corpses they assist (188). Borden also reflects as she observes one of the nurses’ countenance while assisting a dying man: “she is no longer a woman. She is dead already, just as I am – really dead” (*Forbidden* 43). In line with Sinclair’s *The Romantic*, Charlotte finds herself in a position where she is compelled to sacrifice her power to restore John’s degenerate image to normalcy even after his death. This can be interpreted as a representation of the real horrors that many women have felt when witnessing the collective death of men in the battlefield which meant that they take a leading role unfamiliar to them.

Charlotte’s commitment to finish off John’s incomplete task of the war efforts can be seen as an attempt to restore the English masculinity into order and thus risk the reinstatement of the gender hierarchies. By the end of the novel, in her argument with Dr MacClane who tries to convince her to abandon the idea, Charlotte responds: “It doesn’t

matter what he did to *me*. I can't get over his not caring for the wounded.'" (*Romantic* 246). This shows that the image of John's degenerate self still haunts her. Hence, she feels the necessity to save his soul from this degeneracy and regards it as a duty. She reflects on the sense of burden haunting her as: "something that is always struggling to be, to go on being. Something that degeneracy is always trying to keep under [...]. Something that couldn't save itself altogether –that clung to you and called to you to save it" (*Romantic* 248-49). This signifies the way the ghost of John's degenerate subjectivity clings to her. Until she redeems his image from these signs of degeneracy, she remains haunted by it.

The Romantic has been criticised by Angela K Smith. She argues that although the novel celebrates women's war heroism and puts it on an equal footing with men's heroism, Sinclair's female characters' sense of patriotism is a myth and by doing this Sinclair ignored the harsh realities that women lived during their work at the front line (109). While it is true that Sinclair shows an attempt from her female character to taste the romance of patriotism, this war romance, she shows, is short lived. Raitt, Sinclair's biographer, writes that the war event triggered issues for Sinclair about the link between reality and fantasy and that "the war had not, in the end delivered the personal and cultural transformations she had first hoped for" (181). Women's exciting experience of being on the battlefield among dead men and soldiers is rather an ephemeral experience. This ephemerality is born from the endangered male who turns to women for another source of power. Therefore, what Phillips refers to as the female vampire of the war is reversed in this novel that shows how the war breeds instances of the male vampire instead.

This chapter has examined the way Sinclair tackled women's concerns from the pre-war and war-time period to the 1918 that are marked by uncertainty and ambivalence regarding their potential power. In doing so, Sinclair's fiction undergoes a Gothic transformation that adapts with the historical concerns of the period as they impact women.

This is seen through the shifting of its elements from its physicality which means the apparent presence of visible Gothic elements such as ghostly returns as seen in “The Intercessor”, to become internal in her two war novels examined here. This internality is seen through her use of mysticism that can be seen as Gothic because of its association with forms of otherness such as contacting the unseen as a way to empower her female character who has been rejected from taking part in the war aid, making of her supernatural power as her war contribution from the home space. *The Romantic* shows how such potential power is usurped at the theatre of the war by her effeminate male partner. In the words of Wolfreys: “escaping from the tomb and the castle, the monastery and mansion, the gothic arguably becomes more potentially terrifying because of its ability to manifest itself and variations of itself anywhere” (8). Indeed, what is terrifying and that can be called a Gothic experience of women during wartime is women’s uncertain position between their sense of duty to sacrifice their power in saving the image of the English male and taking the leading position. The haunting images that appear to Charlotte about the cowardice of John are signs of this sense of psychological entrapment. Her devotion to clean his image of the degenerate explains her fear of being in the leading role in a world devoid of men. This chapter has shown that the power that the New Woman of the *fin de siècle* fought for and began to grasp is being forcefully sacrificed in a struggle to rescue the declining English masculinity.

Chapter Four: “It is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality. She was always creeping back when I thought I dispatched her”: The *Revenant Angels* of Modernism

It is the special task of the ghost in the Gothic to stand for unfinished human business (That of the dead, that of the living). The ghost enforces the idea of the continuingness of human activity as well as the boundarylessness (body-spirit, living-dead, my haunter-self) (Wilt 64)

In this chapter I draw on my previous analysis on May Sinclair in which we have seen how she adapts Gothic tropes, even transforming them, in her stories to address the concerns of Modernism, particularly, women’s ambivalent position before and during the First World War. Her use of the Gothic emphasises its plasticity as it covers a range of tropes from the physical to the internal. These include: ghosts, telepathy, spiritualism, revenants and vampiric themes. In Sinclair’s war fiction, we have seen the struggle of women to preserve their power which was being usurped from them during the Great War. This has positioned them in a liminal space between their will to sacrifice their power and to preserve it. This chapter shows further the entrapment of women within this liminality at the home front²⁹ which becomes a repository of female fears. This chapter will offer a reading of Modernist non-Gothic texts of Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

²⁹ The term “home front”, Susan Grayzel suggests “entered into common English usage during the First World War, intensifying the identification of the battle or war front as intrinsically masculine and the home front as exclusively feminine” (11)

with reference to Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier* (1918)³⁰ – through the Gothic lens. The latter helps our understanding of women's complex position during this period.

Focusing specifically on female characters, this chapter examines how the anxieties of the Great War forced a return of "The Angel in the House" figure. In a time of mourning and trauma, modernist women never truly managed to eject the "mother" of their Victorian lineage. The Gothic here, therefore, manifests itself through its devices of haunting and the revenant. This is further clarified in Hurley's comment that "The Gothic is rightly, if partially, understood as a cyclical genre that reemerges in times of cultural stress in order to negotiate anxieties for its readership by working through them in displaced (sometimes supernaturalized) form" (193). Literary Modernism is characterised by the intrusion of the past that disturbs its project of "Make it New". Ezra Pound's famous phrase of "Make it New" that was coined in his essay with the same title published in 1935, becomes the Modernist tool of reshaping a whole vision of the century in different fields. Women's war novels aim to provide a distinct vision of women's experience during the war as well as its aftermath. In their attempt to make it new, women writers find themselves haunted by the past, more specifically by their mothers' tradition. Thus, the *Angel* here is a revenant, to borrow Derrida's term, by which he refers to the spectral returns from the past (7). By revenant Derrida refers to the apparitional return of the dead. He states: "Nor does one see in flesh and blood this Thing that is not a thing, this thing that is invisible between its apparitions, when it reappears" (Derrida 6). The *Angel* figure is significant to Derrida's

³⁰ West's war novel is interesting to refer to in the war context because its thematic concerns are central to our understanding of women's shared trauma and the maternal role they perform. I chose this text for the parallels that can be drawn between her female character Margaret Allington and Woolf's Rezia Warren Smith.

definition of the spectral returns as it does not appear in “flesh and blood” but as a spectral entity accompanying modern women.

Marylu Hill, in discussing the Angel in the House in some Modernist texts, affirms that it is often associated with the mother, hence most mothers of Modernist fictions she states are “lovely, silent, and acquiescent (at least on the surface) to the whims of patriarchy; indeed, to a certain extent all these mother figures willingly internalize masculine conceptions of femaleness” (13). Women’s Modernism in these novels witnesses a return of the *Angel* figure. This means she returns to perform her incomplete duties of domesticity, particularly mothering the returned soldier. This means that “Modernists can never be done with the past; they must go on forever haunted by it, digging up its ghosts, recreating it even as they remake their world themselves” (Berman 346). Moreover, the *Angel* revenant shapes the Gothic of the Modernist narratives under study. Because of its ability to articulate the unspeakable, the Gothic permits the writer to articulate the hidden fears of women during and after the First World War. Gina Wisker points out that “Women’s Gothic writing deals with the domestic, with sex and sexuality, spaces, places, behaviours and norms which oppress women” (7). Such issues are also central to women’s Modernism and the Gothic offers an inner look at the psychology of the female character as she traverses the unknown thresholds of modernity.

Virginia Woolf is the focus of this chapter with a reference to Rebecca West’s war novel *The Return of the Soldier* for its thematic commonalities about women’s place within the chaos of the Modernist period. In order to offer an understanding of Woolf’s concerns about the haunting returns of this *Angel* icon, it is necessary to invite Julia Kristeva’s theory

on the “Abject” and “Abjection”³¹. The returned *Angel* can be described as a ghostly abject because it confuses the established rules of the female subject. Eventually, it causes the subject to live in liminality³².

The female characters examined in this chapter, Mrs. Clarissa Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay, Rezia Warren Smith and Margaret Allington of West’s *Return* portray a sense of an unarticulated terror which they experience in a space of darkness known as the liminal space. The liminal is a key device of Gothic fiction since its earliest materialisation. The liminal works to define the in-between zone where the “passenger” is caught³³. This passenger can be a monster, a ghost or a vampire. Monsters, for instance, such as Frankenstein are liminal entities because they exist in the borders between natural and the supernatural³⁴. The liminal in twentieth-century literature comes to define the place of

³¹ Kristeva defines the abject as “A massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A “something” that I do not recognize as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me”. (2)

³² The concept of liminality was developed by Arnold Van Gennep in 1909 in his book *The Rites of Passage* where he refers to it as that phase of moving from one stage of life to another. Victor Turner developed Van Gennep’s theory further looking at it beyond the religious studies. Turner advocates that: Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon. (95). Liminality refers to that state of transience inhabited by the female subject in this case. Liminality is key to our understanding of Kristeva’s theory of Abjection because the latter defines a boundary between two states of being that is “the me” and “the not me”. In line with this, women of Modernism inhabit a space of abjection. Thus, Woolf’s female characters—discussed in this chapter—are positioned in this liminal space where the breakdown in the subject/identity takes place. They are placed within and outside their society.

³³ Victor Turner states that “during the intervening liminal period, the state of the ritual subject (“the passenger”) is ambiguous; he passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state” (94)

³⁴ See Manuel Aguirre’s article on “the rules of Gothic Grammar” where he states that Gothic characters “are detained in the liminal stage, the victims of an incomplete or perverted passage” (2). The female

women who exist in the in-between zones of time and space. Because their present time is disturbed by the constant returns of the *Angel* figure, women are discarded as outsiders. The *Angel* here acts as a second self that the modern female of the early twentieth century seeks to conceal. Additionally, it may, or it may not be recognised by the female character. Kristeva defines the abject as “the me that is not me” and that “it is neither object nor subject” (1). This permits a link between the *Angel* figure and the abject. The *Angel* represents the absent mother of the past who returns in a ghostly form to accomplish her unfinished business of domestic duties. Woolf portrays the way her female characters stray the abject *Angel* in order to achieve an independent subject. The abject *Angel*, therefore, represents part of the female subject which necessitates to be extracted by the modern woman.

Before moving to the *Angel*'s haunting of these female characters in light of the First World War, it is essential to examine Woolf's concerns about the *Angel* figure in a non-war context to illuminate our understanding of its intrusion into the female subject in a time of trauma. Woolf's interest in this figure of the *Angel* is straightforwardly recognizable in the manner in which it haunts her works such as “*A Room of One's Own*” (1929), *To the Lighthouse* and *Mrs. Dalloway*. As an instance of this, Woolf wrote about the *Angel* in her essay “Professions for Women” (1931):

characters of Modernism, although not Gothic characters, share this detainment of the liminal specific to Gothic characters.

Whenever I felt the shadow of her wing or the radiance of her halo upon my page, I took up the ink pot and flung it at her. She died hard. Her fictitious nature was of great assistance to her. It is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality. She was always creeping back when I thought I had dispatched her. Though I flatter myself that I killed her in the end, the struggle was severe; it took much time that had better have been spent upon learning Greek grammar; or roaming the world in search of adventures. ("Professions" 141)

This aspect of the *Angel* figure continues "creeping back" to haunt Woolf's characters in the same way it haunts her here. Mrs. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*, for example, is an iconic character that stirred major interest among feminist critics. This is mainly because of the oppressive nature of the maternal role that she exhibits. It has been argued that the act of killing Mrs. Ramsay was part of Woolf's attempt to discard the *Angel* and its power over women³⁵. Mrs. Ramsay fits in this frame of the *Angel* because her role of motherhood reinserts its concept. The story centres around her and the way she manages her household and family. She is the ideal woman and mother. The scene where Mrs. Ramsay appears to epitomize this occurs in the dinner party that she organises. It is here that she comes face to face with the repression of her role. She asks herself:

³⁵ Woolf has particularly attributed the figure of the Angel in the house to her mother, Julia Stephen, who represents the perfection of motherhood. Woolf expresses in her letter to Vanessa Bell that she has been haunted by the image of her mother reoccurring in her dreams; she states in her letters that "She has always haunted me, partly, I suppose, her beauty; and then dying at that moment, I suppose she cut a great figure on one's mind when it was just awake, and had not any experience of life" (379-83). Hill also states that Woolf's mothers "possess an affinity with silence and being; they create unities and atmospheres; they are beautiful; they are associated with nature and cyclical time; and they are all fundamentally trapped within the patriarchal constructs of domesticity which they themselves have embrace" (170).

But what have I done with my life? thought Mrs Ramsay, taking her place at the head of the table, and looking at all the plates making white circles on it. "William, sit by me," she said. "Lily," she said, wearily, "over there." They had that – Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle - she, only this - an infinitely long table and plates and knives (*Lighthouse* 309).

It is at this level that Mrs. Ramsay encounters her trapped self within the confinement of her domestic life. She questions her life as she takes her place at the head of the table and this is when she, actually, comes to recognise her restricting position. Her question of "what have I done with my life?" is followed by her need for a momentary escape from her oppressive domestic life:

And it was a relief when they went to bed. For now she need not think about anybody. She could be herself, by herself. And that was what now she often felt the need of – to think; well not even to think. To be silent; to be alone. All the being and the doing, expansive, glittering, vocal, evaporated; and one shrunk, with a sense of solemnity, to being oneself, a wedge-shaped core of darkness, something invisible to others. (*Lighthouse* 296)

This momentary escape is indicative of her repressed wishes about evading her domestic role. When she is on her own, as seen in this passage, she discovers a part of herself which remains dark and "invisible to others". This hidden self is what the society aims to keep buried; it is masked by the image of the *Angel* that she has to conform to. Then she reflects:

And to everybody there was always this sense of unlimited resources, she supposed; one after another, she, Lily, Augustus Carmichael, must feel, our apparitions, the things you know us by, are simply childish. Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep; but now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by. Her horizon seemed to her limitless. There were all the places she had not seen; the Indian plains; she felt herself pushing aside the thick leather curtain of a church in Rome. (*Lighthouse* 296)

It is at this level where Riquelme's point about "the hiding places" (4) of the Gothic in the twentieth century takes place. Rather than the mysterious Gothic castles, the hidden place that this passage unravels is the female self which is concealed beneath the performance of the *Angel*. The *Angel* figure in this example enacts what is seen to others. In this sense, it functions as an apparition of the real and repressed self. Foley in this respect calls this apparitional self "social self" which is "misleading" (125). This misleading self is further seen in Mrs. Ramsay's sense of dilemma about her position. Despite her questioning her status and her desire to reunite with her hidden self through transitory moments, she still attempts to reinforce her Victorian codes on the female characters in the novel to satisfy the *Angel* within her, such as the necessity for marriage and having children:

And here she was, she reflected, feeling life rather sinister again, making Minta marry Paul Rayley; because whatever she might feel about her own transaction, and she had had experiences which need not happen to everyone (she did not name them to herself), she was driven on, too quickly she knew, almost as if it were an escape for her too, to say that people must marry; people must have children. (*Lighthouse* 73)

This passage reveals the uneasy sensation that she feels when she imposes her Victorian traditions. This explains the fact that the oppressive life of her Victorian society undermines

the contemporary vision of her time as represented in Lily Briscoe, a female guest at her house, for instance. Although she is optimistic that Minta and Paul as a couple “will be perfectly happy”, she is in fact reluctant about the idea of marriage per se. What is remarkable about Mrs. Ramsay’ insistence on marriage, Kate Haffey argues, “is not her desire to forge romantic unions between her friends and acquaintances but rather her construction of marriage as a mandate, as something all people “must” do” (157). Further to this, as we observe the inner struggle of Mrs. Ramsay we notice the presence of a dual self. In that, as she tries to satisfy the “social self” through acting in accordance with what her society imposes, she still finds it “sinister” to submit to it. This repressed other self can be conceived of in Gothic terms. This finds its clarification in Woolf’s words in her review of Edith Birkheads’s *The Tale of Terror* (1921):

The skull-headed lady, the vampire gentleman, the whole troop of monks and monsters who once froze and terrified now gibber in some dark cupboard of the servants’ hall. In our day we flatter ourselves the effect is produced by subtler means.

It is at the ghosts within us that we shudder, and not the decaying bodies of barons or the subterranean activities of ghouls. (307)

The *Angel* image in Modernism is characterised by this sense of invisibility. The Angel in the house in this sense is the ghost “within us” that Woolf refers to in her review. It is the ghost within that obscures women’s wishes. With this in hand, Mrs. Ramsay is modelled after the Victorian idealistic picture of the female, given the fact that the events of the first part of the novel come prior to the commencement of First World War. During this period,

women were still in quest of liberation³⁶. Hence, while Mrs. Ramsay appears to perform her domestic duties – such as organising marriage plans for the female characters around her – she still shows a sense of ambivalence during her ephemeral moments of solitude. The character of Mrs. Ramsay offers an example of the way the *Angel* figure tries to spread her legacy to later generations. The writer negates such an attempt through killing Mrs. Ramsay in the story.

Mrs. Ramsay dies mysteriously in the next section of the novel, “Time Passes”. Mrs. Ramsay, however, still haunts the house. This finds its example in the way that “Mr. Ramsay, stumbling along a passage one dark morning, stretched his arms out, but Mrs. Ramsay having died rather suddenly the night before, his arms, though stretched out, remained empty.” (*Lighthouse* 360). This confirms further the phantasmic nature of Mrs. Ramsay. Judith Wilt, in this respect, adds that “The surprise (the terror, the ecstasy) of her death takes palpable form in Part II in the ghost to whom Mr Ramsay wordlessly stretches out his arms” (73). While the passage above shows the writer’s attempt to kill the *Angel*, the scene of Mr. Ramsay’s stretching his arms to hold nothingness illustrates the immortality of Mrs. Ramsay in the way that her ghost still lives through the characters of the novel.

Woolf projects the terror of the First World War from inside the house in *Lighthouse*. This terror is inherent in the destruction of the household in the section of “Time Passes”.

³⁶ Angela K Smith points out that “the beginning of the twentieth century was an exciting time for women. Campaigners for women’s rights had been making slow headway in the areas of women’s general rights, education and the medical profession since the mid-nineteenth century. Around the turn of the twentieth century there was an acceleration in the campaign for the vote, as many of the numerous suffrage societies amalgamated to create the National Union of Women’s Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), closely followed by the formation, by Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters, of the much more militant Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU)” (7).

The collapse of the house as well as the death of Mrs. Ramsay can be said to mirror an attempt from the writer to eradicate the domestic order. The concerns that resulted from the outbreak of the war, by contrast, led to an emphasis on the restoration of the pre-war period's order. This means that the destruction that the British society witnessed at many levels necessitated women's aid. While the Great War seems to promise more independence from the restricting patriarchal order, women are eventually put back inside the box of the house which is haunted by the shadow of the Victorian mother such as Mrs. Ramsay. This is made clear in the last section of the novel where the ghost of Mrs. Ramsay takes shape. Its fragmented apparitions occur to Lily.

Lily is one of the guests at the Ramsay's family. She is portrayed as an artist struggling to finish her paintings because of the opinions of men such as the character of Charles Tansley. Mrs. Ramsay has been acting as a threatening mother figure to Lily who insists on imposing her traditional ideals on her such as marriage. Lily expresses how frightening Mrs. Ramsay can be:

There was something frightening about her. She was irresistible. Always she got her own way in the end, Lily thought. Now she had brought this off – Paul and Minta, one might suppose, were engaged. Mr Bankes was dining here. She put a spell on them all, by wishing, so simply, so directly [...] in this strange, this terrifying thing, which made Paul Rayley, sitting at her side, all of a tremor, yet abstract, absorbed, silent. [...] Mrs. Ramsay [...] led her victims, Lily felt, to the altar (*Lighthouse* 193)

Seen as such, Lily feels the necessity to eject this figure along with its imposing codes through refusing the marriage plot that Mrs. Ramsay has attempted to plan for her. It is stated in Kristeva's theory that the abject despite being ejected continues to sneak in from

its place of “banishment”³⁷. As such, with the death of Mrs. Ramsay, Lily thinks that she is freer now and set on finishing her painting; however, Mrs. Ramsay reoccurs as a ghost in the third part of the novel “The Lighthouse”. She follows Lily as her shadow. This is made clear through the ghostly visions that Lily encounters as she paints:

But the dead, thought Lily, encountering some obstacle in her design which made her pause and ponder, stepping back a foot or so, Oh, the dead! she murmured, one pitied them, one brushed them aside, one had even a little contempt for them. They are at our mercy. Mrs Ramsay has faded and gone, she thought. We can override her wishes, improve away her limited, old-fashioned ideas. (*Lighthouse* 198)

This passage shows further the clash between the modern woman and the *Angel* haunting her. Thinking that she is liberated from Mrs. Ramsay, Lily encounters spectral visions of the dead woman as she paints. In that, Lily’s attempt to achieve a feminine independence through her art profession is disrupted by the return of the ghost of Mrs. Ramsay. It is argued by some critics that Lily could only finalise her painting after the death of Mrs. Ramsay; Hill in this view points out that “Lily succeeds in painting the mother’s essence only after Mrs. Ramsay is safely dead and therefore less overwhelming” (169). In fact, we see in the passage above that Lily is interrupted by the intrusive ghost of Mrs. Ramsay through haunting memories. This can also be seen in the following episode:

³⁷ Kristeva says “A certain “ego” that merged with its master, a superego, has flatly driven it away. It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter’s rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master” (2). Although ejected, the abject still challenges its master. Likewise, although dead, the ghost of Mrs Ramsay continues to live through the characters in the novel such as Lily.

And Lily, painting steadily, felt as if a door had opened, and one went in and stood gazing silently about in a high cathedral-like place, very dark, very solemn. Shouts came from a world far away [...] Mrs. Ramsay sat silent. She was glad, Lily thought, to rest in silence, uncommunicative; to rest in the extreme obscurity of human relationships. (*Lighthouse* 195)

It is such spectral visions that Lily gets in the last section of the narrative. This is to show that despite the indication of her death earlier in the novel, Mrs. Ramsay still lives through the character of Lily. She emerges through memory hindering her quest of artistic individuation. Lily finishes her painting at the close of the novel, this can only explain the idea that it is only after embracing the *Angel* that she is enabled to finish her painting. Hill adds that mothers like Mrs. Ramsay have hidden power which is oppressed by the societal ideology of her time (13). Thinking that she could finally defy Mrs. Ramsay's wishes after her death, Lily appears to be in need for Mrs. Ramsay's visions to finish her painting. It occurs that it is only after having those visions that she can finally put her last touches on the painting. It is arguable that the hidden power that the *Angel*, haunting Mrs. Ramsay, has been unable to exercise during her lifetime is now being consumed for their contemporary daughters through memory. In other words, despite the archetypal role that the *Angel* displays through Mrs. Ramsay, it appears that it is not dangerous and rather a necessary tool.

The *Angel* lives in two other female characters in Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway*: Clarissa Dalloway and Lucrezia Warren Smith. Clarissa faces a similar maternal ambivalence to Mrs. Ramsay. Clarissa's haunted self appears through her complex maternal role because she seems to have a complex relationship with her daughter Elizabeth. For example, Clarissa exhibits a sense of jealousy and threat as she sees her

daughter's close relationship with her history teacher Doris Kilman. Woolf expresses this threat through the Gothic themes of monstrosity and spectrality:

For it was not her one hated but the idea of her, which undoubtedly had gathered in to itself a great deal that was not Miss Kilman; had become one of those spectres with which one battles in the night; one of those spectres who stand astride us and stuck up half our lifeblood, dominators and tyrants [...] it rasped her, though, to have stirring about in her this brutal monster (*Dalloway* 13)

Clarissa's envy, hence, springs from her insecurity about her maternal position. It is not the physicality of her that Clarissa fears but "the idea of her" the specter. Miss Kilman's close relationship to Clarissa's daughter Elizabeth indicates Clarissa's maternal superficiality. She is not the ideal mother to Elizabeth, yet she fears losing her role to Miss Kilman. The latter is presented as a monstrous figure that "stuck up half our lifeblood" indicating a threat to Clarissa's maternal authority. The complexity of her maternal position occurs in the way that despite the sense of confinement that it offers, Clarissa still clings to it. The *Angel* figure lives "within" Clarissa as it veils and controls her hidden wishes. Like Mrs. Ramsay's, it is this *Angel* image which remains visible to her society. Indeed,

She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown; there being no more marrying, no more having of children now, but only this astonishing and rather solemn progress with the rest of them, up Bond Street, this being Mrs. Dalloway; not even Clarissa any more; this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway (*Dalloway* 11)

As she walks outside her private sphere, she is like an apparition of herself. This apparition has the name of Mrs. Richard Dalloway. In order to achieve a unified identity, Clarissa needs to release herself from this apparitional entity. Jim Hansen argues that Clarissa represents the confinement of twentieth-century women. Woolf, he adds, used Gothic

formulae “to reveal the unnoticed and unconscious structure of a cultural ideology that has confined modern women as fully as the castles of the eighteenth century had confined the young heroines of Gothic fiction” (641). She is rather haunted by the likes of such Gothic heroines, her mother from the past which intrudes into the present disguising itself in the *Angel*. This figure has to be repelled in order for Clarissa to come to terms with her repressed desires.

Given Clarissa’s superficiality of Motherhood and jealousy of Miss Kilman, it becomes noticeable how she is trapped in the liminal and the uncertainty associated with it. The mother according to Kristeva remains a threatening figure or “abject”. The child experiences a persisting “fear of falling back into the mother’s body” (Kristeva 8). In the same way, women of Modernism are under an ongoing threat of embracing their mothers’ history. Consequently, they fall in this terrific border of the liminal, burdened by the necessity to reject their mothers. Whereas Clarissa attempts to be independent she is drawn backwards by the *Angel* within her. Unlike Mrs. Ramsay, Clarissa is not killed by the writer in the story, yet her death wish is projected in another character who plays her alter-ego³⁸. This character is Septimus Warren Smith, a World War One veteran who puts an end to his life to escape from the mental torture of his trauma. It has been argued that he is the double of Clarissa and by committing suicide he has, actually, acted for Clarissa’s wishes to kill herself. This is an indication of the writer’s intention to murder the *Angel* in the house. This

³⁸ As Woolf herself noted in her 1928 introduction to *Mrs Dalloway* where she stated that “Of Mrs Dalloway then one can only bring to light at the moment a few scraps, of little importance or none perhaps; as that in the first version Septimus, who later is intended to be her double, has no existence; and that Mrs Dalloway was originally to kill herself, or perhaps merely to die at the end of the party” (198).

figure also finds its promotion in Septimus's wife Lucrezia, and this confirms further its haunting aspect.

It can be remarked that war fictions are dominated by male writers and they often revolve around describing the male experience of the war. Women writers are consequently pushed to the corner of the other in this respect. This is because they did not take an actual part in the fight at the Western Front. Women, to compensate for their sense of burden and guilt regarding this matter, participated in the war aid serving in hospitals particularly.³⁹ Apart from their physical participation as nurses, women had endured psychological trauma resulting from witnessing the anxieties of the war and mainly the breakdown of male figures. The psychological cost of this has cast women in the role of strangers. This means they become strangers to themselves because the atrocities of the war had compelled them to re-play traditional roles which they thought they moved beyond. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Rezia Warren Smith exemplifies the body of women who had not taken a physical part in war effort but endured an equal suffering to that of their male's counterparts. Dorothy Goldman supports this point as she states that "War literature is traditionally and narrowly defined as mud and trenches, barbed wire and slaughter; women's understanding of the war is inevitably less physical than that of men who fought at the front" (6)

The psychological cost of the war for women stirred the *Angel* figure to emerge and to spread her legacy of domesticity and entrapment. In that, the *Angel* that Lucrezia confronts emerges as a result of Septimus's trauma. After the First World War, Woolf states "we breakfast upon a richer feast of horror than served our ancestors for a twelvemonth . .

³⁹ See Angela K Smith's introduction in *The Second Battlefield Women, modernism and the First World War* for further details. P7

.we are impervious to fear” (288). At this level, Woolf implies that women experienced a new sense of “horror” emblematic of war trauma in the trenches. In addition, it is important to notice that Rezia endures a sense of confinement even when she is in the public sphere as she becomes a carer for her psychologically wounded husband. In this novel, the *Angel* finds its promotion in mothering the shattered male character Septimus. As she witnesses this shattered man who seems to be detached from reality, Rezia is thrust into the female space of liminality which seems to emerge as a characteristic of women’s complex position in Modernism, particularly during and after the First World War. Therefore, the “feast of horror” that modern women “breakfast upon” originates from witnessing war atrocities as well as feeling the responsibility to appease the chaotic state of the male. Women’s newly gained freedom is consumed by their reinforced performance of the maternal.

Before Examining Rezia’s maternal experience, however, it is necessary to review Septimus’s trauma first to understand her agony. Trauma comes from an outside threat; it overwhelms the psychic defences of the subject and threatens its boundaries with collapse. In this sense, the subject develops “unhomely” sensations which can be seen in the victim’s detachment from reality as well as his inability to distinguish between what is real and what is not. The individual at this stage is subject to experiencing terror that shakes his vision of reality⁴⁰. That is to say, the boundaries of reality are transgressed by the constant return of repressed memories from the war. Peter Childs, in this regard, asserts that to many Modernist writers

⁴⁰ The “unhomely” according to Freud is that sensation of estrangement of something that was once familiar (“Uncanny” 125)

there wasn't a unitary normative self to which each of us might conform, and many Modernists were sufficiently influenced by advances of psychology to change the way they represented human character. For Lawrence, Woolf, Joyce and others the self was not a stable but evolving, fluid, discontinuous and fragmented (59).

In addition to this disillusionment of the Post-War era, soldiers like Septimus return to live as disembodied entities between life and death. This, in a way, recalls T.S Eliot's canonical poem *The Waste Land* published in 1922 where he refers to early English civilians as emptied bodies of substance. In alluding to Dante's phantasmagoric lines "I had not thought death had undone so many" (60-65), Eliot encapsulates the disillusionment of post-war England with its people walking around in rings like walking dead. Eliot's description of the post-war man finds its example in Septimus. He is unwelcomed by his post-war society and constantly watched by his past. The uncanny takes place in the way in which his trauma is sketched through the "constant recurrence of the same thing" ("Uncanny" 142). In fact, the trauma per se is uncanny for the foreign body it brings upon the individual.

Septimus fails to locate "the homely" when his past intrudes upon his present to obscure his vision of the world around him. Rezia states: "He had grown stranger and stranger. He said people were talking behind the bedroom walls" (*Dalloway* 72). Coming back from the Western Front trenches, Septimus finds himself locked up in his war memories while the spectral calls of Evans – his war comrade who died in the war – "hover on the periphery of his consciousness" (*Dalloway* 45-46). He clearly lives in seclusion from his world which becomes a space of anxiety to him. This occurs in the writer's narrative that "even Holmes himself could not touch this last relic straying on the edge of the world, this outcast, who gazed back at the inhabited regions, who lay, like a drowned sailor, on the shore of the world." (*Dalloway* 102). Surviving the trenches, veterans are thrown into a world of terror dictated by the guilt of survival. Septimus exists in a space between life

and death; he is rendered as “something that one does not know if it is living or if it is dead” (Derrida 3-5). Liminality is a state between two borders, two states or two positions. The shift from the idealistic Victorian manhood to the wounded masculinity result in a prevalence of liminal spaces which correlate with the Modernist symptoms of fragmentation, instability, alienation, abjection and the uncanny. Even the Modernist narrative, Derek Duncan argues: “was no longer guided by a solid plot and secure temporality, as space, both material and psychological became the more dominant medium” (5). Indeed, stability in Modernism is absent. It is remarkable that there is a sense of transience across spaces in Modernism which leads to an emergence of transitions across boundaries. The fears that soldiers faced in the liminality of the trenches are similar to the fears of the post-war world.

In the immediate post-war period, Septimus exhibits a fear of this liminal state. Woolf writes that he is positioned as a “drowned sailor, on the shore of the world” (*Dalloway* 102). He drifts between past and present as well as between life and death. This is what characterises the returned wounded veteran’s uncertain space. This originates from his sense of vulnerability and feminization that are labelled as sins or weakness by his present society that denies the subject of trauma. Having lost faith in his pre-war assumptions, he realises that he is no longer part of this society that he has fought for and that he cannot conform to the beliefs and tenets of British society’s idea of the masculine role. Then, he becomes immersed in his own world defined by the ghostly, where the ghost of Evans, becomes visible to him:

“For God’s sake don’t come!” Septimus cried out. For he could not look upon the dead.

But the branches parted. A man in grey was actually walking towards them. It was Evans! But no mud was on him; no wounds, he was not changed. I must tell the whole world, Septimus cried, raising his hand (as the dead man in the grey suit came nearer) ... (*Dalloway* 76).

Martin Tropp, in commenting about the return of the dead during the First World War, recalls Radcliffe’s Gothic device of the ghost behind the veil in her novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* to emphasise that it has become an important Gothic element (3). His point allows us to draw a link with the scene where Septimus envisions the ghost of Evans. This occurs in another scene: “it was at that moment (Rezia had gone shopping) that the great revelation took place. A voice spoke from behind the screen. Evans was speaking. The dead were with him. ‘Evans, Evans!’ he cried.” (*Dalloway* 102). Although Woolf has criticised Radcliffe’s ghosts saying that “your ghosts only make us laugh” (288), she employs her device of the corpse behind the veil still. This is an indication of how Modernists used earlier Gothic machinations to give a vivid illustration of the horrors of the Great War. With a Freudian twist, the Gothic presents Woolf with a rhetorical toolbox to demonstrate the haunted liminal space of returned soldiers and their women companions alike. There is, in fact, a shared space between the returned soldiers and their women. The character of Rezia Warren Smith allows us to examine this commonality further.

Septimus and Rezia have been married for five years, and the reader first meets them as they are walking in Hyde Park. Rezia’s struggles start to occur at this point of the narrative where she witnesses her husband’s horrified and alienated self. Burdened with the responsibility to cure him, she starts to project a sense of marginalization akin to his. Indeed, Rezia is a neglected character who has skipped the attention of scholars in

discussions of Gothic and Modernism. She brings to light the experience of women who had to bear with the physical and psychological chaos of their male relatives in a time of women's feminist prosperity⁴¹. Septimus's trauma evokes the *Angel* within her. This *Angel* figure is characterised by being confined and subservient to her ailing husband. The imprisonment of the Gothic heroine in the underground vaults of Gothic castles becomes accurate in literary Modernism in that Rezia is trapped in the liminal passages of London's "Waste Land".

It is important to note that the places where Rezia most experiences her moments of entrapment as well as alienation are outside the domestic space. In London parks and streets, she experiences her utmost agony about her loneliness and vulnerability in the face of her husband's haunted world. This is to say that women are insecure outdoors. Ironically, the modern woman managed to escape the confines of the home, yet she is still confined outside the home as well. In this novel, her confinement stems from watching the crisis of masculinity engulfing post-war England.

Unlike Clarissa who portrays a sense of independence as she strolls in London streets as she thinks: "I love walking in London" (*Dalloway* 6), Rezia unravels a sense of entrapment while she accompanies Septimus for a walk. This is made clear in the narrative: "Help, help! She wanted to cry out to butchers' boys and women" (*Dalloway* 17) as Rezia listens to his war hallucinations of wanting to kill himself. It can be noticed that there is a

⁴¹ Goldman comments on women's war writings that despite their "complaints about their prewar restrictions and their wartime existence, there remains in their writing the pity for men's suffering. Even when there is outspoken opposition to the War, women express both pity and guilt: guilt at not being involved, at being merely onlookers of the massacre", she also adds that the condition of the war has placed the woman into the "archetypal female nurturing roles of mother, of nurse" (11).

sense of unhomeliness overwhelming both characters for their experiences appear to be analogous. Their mutual sufferance is dictated by foreignness and estrangement. Rezia is drawn to her husband's ghosted world which renders her as vulnerable; she reflects: "far was Italy and the white houses and the room where her sisters sat making hats, and the streets crowded every evening with people walking, laughing out loud, not half alive like people here" (*Dalloway* 25). She describes people as "half alive"; this of course does not exclude Septimus. Modernism generates an uncanny chaos spelled out by a crisis in the "homely" of both male and female consciousness. Royle defines the uncanny as:

The crisis of the natural, touching upon everything that one might have thought was 'part of nature': one's own nature, human nature, the nature of reality and the world.

But the uncanny is not simply an experience of strangeness and alienation. More specifically, it is a peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar. (1)

Modernist spaces become repositories of terrors for the individual and "the crisis of the natural" here concerns both Septimus and Rezia. This crisis is manifested through their common experiences of alienation and exile. As we know, Septimus's alienation stems from his trauma that causes a disjointed time and space. Rezia on the other hand, is exiled as she fails to restore her ill husband to normality. She suffers as a result in the way that her efforts start draining. Hence, not only because she is a foreigner that she is marginalized but because of Septimus's mental condition that she is thrust into the marginal. One instance of this occurs when Rezia witnesses Septimus's frightened self after seeing a passing motor car:

And there the motor-car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to the surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who am blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose?

“Let us go on, Septimus,” said his wife, a little woman, with large eyes in a sallow pointed face; an Italian girl. (*Dalloway* 16)

Septimus lives in seclusion and his thinking that “It is I who am blocking the way” is an indication of this. In his perspective, everything around him is a threat. “The motor car”, for instance, functions as an object of horror permeating from his war experience to post-war London to carry out its “unfinished business”. This act of surveillance can be explained through Derrida’s concept of “the visor effect” which takes place when the person feels that he is watched by a spectral entity. Derrida says: “This spectral someone other looks at us, we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part” (7). While Septimus is watched by the ghosts of the battlefield, Rezia is surveilled by the ghost of the *Angel* that confines her and turns her silent. In “Professions”, Woolf expresses:

[the Angel in the House] was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was a chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it—in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all—I need not say it —she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief

beauty—her blushes, her great grace. In those days—the last of Queen Victoria—every house had its Angel (245)

In this way, Rezia displays the same silence pertinent of the *Angel* that lives in her. This *Angel* figure performs itself in the form of a mother and a nurse. This statement from the novel: “Nothing could rouse him. Rezia has put him to bed” (*Dalloway* 99) unravels the infantilised position of the man and her act of putting him to bed demonstrates her domestic role carried out by the *Angel* within her.

The *Angel*’s characteristics of being self-sacrificing and a subservient woman are found in the woman carer of returned veterans, meaning that the conditions resulting from the war have let women embrace the traits of a figure that they despise. Further to this, in a *Room of One’s Own* (1929), Woolf has given an illustration of the silent and victim woman writer who lacks freedom in patriarchal society. Naming her Judith Shakespeare, Woolf argues that “she lives in you and in me, and in many other women who are not here tonight, for they are washing up the dishes and putting the children to bed” (*Room* 111-12). Although it is beyond my focus, Woolf’s expression about the woman writer evokes a Gothic ideology of haunting which is relevant to the character of Rezia. Miglena Nikolchina, in this respect, states that “both Shakespeare’s sister and the Angel in the house are Woolf’s allegories of female silence” (90).

We have seen the sort of ghosts that Septimus sees but Rezia’s ghosts are not as detectable in the novel. Hers occupy part of herself that she is not aware of. This means, there resides within her a ghostly abject which is inherent in her invisibility as she strolls through the passages of modernity. Her invisibility stems from the fact that her inner terrors are unseen and her cries of horror and loneliness would go unobserved. An example of this can be seen when she hears Septimus say that he will kill himself: “Help, help! She wanted to cry out to butchers’ boys and women” (*Dalloway* 17). This can also be remarked in

another scene where she continues to express her estrangement from a place populated by “half alive” people; she says: “‘For you should see the Milan gardens’, she said aloud. But to whom? There was nobody. Her words faded” (*Dalloway* 25). She is, then, like an *Angel* ghost whose task during this period is nurturing the returned soldier who is in a shattered condition. Woolf had referred to such intrusive ghosts in her review of Henry James’s ghost stories where states that:

Henry James’s ghosts have nothing in common with the violent old ghosts—the blood-stained sea captains, the white horses, the headless ladies of dark lanes and windy commons. They have their origins within us. They are present whenever the significant overflows our powers of expressing it; whenever the ordinary appears ringed by the strange. (323)

This passage recalls the way in which the unknown invades the familiar and the ordinary. For instance, “The ordinary” marriage life that Rezia has desired appears to be “ringed by the strange”. In other terms, her life is “ringed” by the terrors of her unknown and her neglected position. As such, her marriage only offers psychological entrapment. Although she is enabled to stroll in the city, she remains imprisoned as long as she acts as a nurturer for Septimus. The following quote from the text shows the way she opts for a temporary release from this entrapment that she feels:

“Septimus!” said Rezia. He started violently. People must notice.

“I am going to walk to the fountain and back”, she said.

For she could stand it no longer. Dr. Holmes might say there was nothing the matter. Far rather would she that he were dead! [...] She spread her hand before her. Look! Her wedding ring slipped—she had grown thin. It was she who suffered—but she had nobody to tell” (*Dalloway* 24)

As she attempts to escape her role of nurse to Septimus, she ends up returning like she returns to him after her walk. Thinking that she might find him dead as “he threatened, to kill himself” (*Dalloway* 26), Rezia is surprised to see him “still sitting alone on the seat” (*Dalloway* 26) where she has left him. This, in a way, symbolises the way that the post-war modern world necessitated a return of women to domesticity and to the maternal. Furthermore, the scene of her “grow[ing] thin” is symptomatic of her sufferance with her traumatised husband. As seen earlier in this chapter, the *Angel* figure can act as an abject which causes the crisis in the proper. Hence, her act of growing thin is symptomatic of the threatening abject. Also, the scene where her wedding ring slips is indicative of her marriage repression and the element of estrangement that it brings with it. Moreover, her temporary retreat as she walks to the fountain and losing her wedding ring imply the fact that she wants to free herself from the inner confines that the *Angel* figure imposes on her: “I am alone; I am alone! she cried, by the fountain in Regent’s Park” (*Dalloway* 26). In a way, marriage imprisons women like Rezia, but their existence outside it is one of the outcast, insecure and psychologically exposed.

Rezia’s ambivalent position finds its parallel in Rebecca West’s female character Margaret Allington – in her 1918 war novel *The Return of the Soldier* – which I hope to examine for their shared experience in light of war anxieties. Margaret also depicts the same sense of self-sacrifice, specific to the codes of the *Angel*, in favour of putting the Modernist chaotic masculinity into place.

The Return of the Soldier tells the story of a war veteran, Chris Baldry, who returns to his ancestral home England discharged because of shell-shock. Having lost his memory, Chris is unable to recall the past fifteen years of his life. The only flashbacks he gets belong to the pre-war period when he was in love with a woman called Margaret Allington and neither his marriage nor his current wife are recognized by him. The novel focuses on

women's involvement with war trauma as lived through his wife Kitty, his cousin Jenny, the narrator, and Margaret who become silent watchers of this shattered man. Chris's amnesia shows the change that the Great War wrought upon soldiers as it also equally brings to light the change affecting women's status, which is rendered ambivalent.

Rezia and Margaret can be examined in parallel for their shared experience of mothering the returned soldier. In West's *Return*, the *Angel* revenant emerges as Margaret encounters Chris in the infantilised state that the war has produced. Chris's character stages a crisis of Edwardian masculinity which the Great War created. His trauma encapsulates "the breakdown of a domestic culture centered on the "amazing goodness" of English maleness" (Kavka 153). "The breakdown" in this novel is manifested through the childlike position that Chris undertakes which at the same time reinforces women's domestic roles as a result. An example of this can be seen in the narrative:

He lay there in the confiding relaxation of a sleeping child, his hands unclenched, and his head thrown back so that the bare throat showed defenselessly. Now he was asleep and his face undarkened by thought one saw how very fair he really was. [...] and [Margaret], her mournfully vigilant face pinkened by the cold river of air sent by the advancing evening through the screen of rusted-gold bracken behind her, was sitting by him, just watching (*Return* 107).

The subject of motherhood in the First World War has been addressed by many historians for the confusing position of mothers during this period. Motherhood has been considered the backbone of a nation which was on the verge of collapse, for mothers were regarded as rescuers of this shattered society. This means that they become the nation's hope towards

restoration⁴². The ambiguity about women's place is stirred by this confusion that the nation has led upon them when they were beginning to move beyond the traditional scope of domesticity in the years just before the war. It is true that women in the early twentieth century began to enjoy some freedom⁴³. Childs refers to this power as a "sinister power" (176) which women gained at the cost of the damaged masculinity culminating from the Great War. Sandra Gilbert, also, explains that the war allowed women's power to develop (199-200). Of course, this is true to some extent, but one must consider that the war also kept them back indoors to carry on their unfinished task of mothering. This is also pointed out by Ouditt who affirms that: "The war, then, rather than taking women out of the home, is seen as an awesome signal to them to return to their natural duty" (93). Indeed, Margaret exemplifies this idea. This occurs in the way that the writer locates her female characters within the private sphere of Baldry Court house. Margaret's task, indeed, does not go beyond nurturance of the infant soldier within this domestic space of the Baldry Court house.

The infantilized position of Chris in this case allows the reader to draw a connection with the ejected children that are made reference to in the novel. The reference is made at the beginning of the story where we learn that Chris has a dead child. We also learn that the ghostly presence of this dead child is still felt in the house. The narrator, Jenny,

⁴² Susan Grayzel notes that motherhood was considered as women's contribution to the War effort and that "commentators continually reminded women that what happened at "home" was pivotal to what happened in the theatre of war" (3). Hence, mothers became an important pillar upon which the nation depended, that is first by giving up their sons to the war and also by serving as carers for returned soldiers.

⁴³ Grayzel states that "The war brought about tangible evidence of a changed world where women could wear khaki uniforms, drive trains, trams and ambulances, and take on industrial tasks previously defined as beyond their capabilities. Furthermore, many women found themselves enfranchised after the war. Yet the end of war and demobilisation displaced most waged women workers from their wartime occupations—particularly in fields that had traditionally been the province of men" (101).

comments on the sense of haunting overwhelming the house that looks “as though there were still a child in the house” (*Return* 5). Another dead child alluded to in the novel is Margaret’s. She has lost her child four years earlier, and she still mourns his loss. This allows one to make a link with the infantilized state of the returned soldier and the role of the woman facing this situation. In that, negating the physical presence of children in the novel does not redeem women from performing their maternal role⁴⁴. The haunting presence of Chris’s child, to add, can be said to prefigure women’s expected role of mothering the wounded soldier. Laura Cowan notes in this regard that “Even though none of the women have living children, Margaret’s nurturing ability to replenish Chris makes her an archetypal maternal figure” (48). Through embracing the infant soldier, Margaret conforms to the code of maternity, thus embraces the *Angel* within her. The narrator impressively describes the sense of safety that she brings to Chris:

How her near presence had been known by Chris I do not understand, but there he was, running across the lawn as night after night I had seen him in my dreams running across No Man’s Land. I knew that so he would close his eyes as he ran; I knew that so he would pitch on his knees when he reached safety. I assumed that at Margaret’s feet lay safety, even before I saw her arms brace him under the armpits with a gesture that was not passionate, but rather the movement of one carrying a wounded man

⁴⁴ George Robb here indicates that “The war also emphasized motherhood as women’s primary patriotic role, and as such continually undercut their attempts to break out of the doll’s house” (88). This explains the fact that although not necessarily mothering children women are placed back in the “doll’s house” mothering their traumatised men.

from under fire [...] it was as though her embrace fed him, he looked so strong as he broke away. (*Return* 90)

This passage shows women's sacrifice and the way Chris feeds on Margaret's power. This illustrates women's contribution to the war on the home front. The rebirth of the *Angel* occurs through its haunting aspect. In this passage, Jenny describes Margaret's embrace as an act of "carrying a wounded man from under fire". This means that although Margaret has not been physically present in the war site, she still contributes to the war through the sense of spiritual relief she spreads around Chris. In other words, it is symbolic of the spiritual maternal role that women conduct at the home space. The movement of rescuing him from under fire has a symbolic significance to the importance of the nurturing role that many women had to play during the war time.

The role of spiritual motherhood is foreshadowed earlier in the novel. The image of the missing child that still haunts the nursery of Baldry Court reveals women's ambivalence concerning the notion of motherhood that the writer seems to shed light on. Also, the haunted nursery by the dead child of Chris foreshadows the haunted world of Modernism by the childlike returned soldiers. By negating the actual child early in the novel only to make Margaret embrace the infant-like soldier, West hints at the dilemma overwhelming women during the war. As she walks in the nursery of Chris's dead child, Margaret remembers her child and cries "I want a child! I want a child!" (*Return* 132). The narrator adds: "her arms invoked the life that had been squandered in this room. 'it's all gone so wrong!' she fretted, and her voice dropped to a solemn whisper. 'They each had only half a life...'" (*Return* 132). The ending of the novel is ambiguous but one clear fact is that it is Margaret who cures Chris and restores his sanity by reminding him of his dead son and showing him "the red ball that he and his father used to play with on the lawn" (*Return* 133). Given the fact that a psychoanalyst, called Dr Gilbert Anderson, has been

called to cure Chris, it is clearly shown that it is Margaret's maternal power that has remedied Chris's amnesia. This is made clear in the way that she responds to Dr Anderson as he explains Chris's case:

There was a directness of speech, a straight stare, that was for her a frenzy "Doctor," she said, her mild voice roughened, "what's the use of talking? You can't cure him." She caught her lower lip with her teeth and fought back from the brink of tears. "make him happy, I mean. All you can do is to make him ordinary" (*Return* 127).

Margaret seems to know the way to cure Chris, but she shows a reluctance. Her hesitation in regard to healing Chris stems from her awareness that he has to return to the Front when he is cured. For example, when she is in the nursery searching for the dead boy's item that might help Chris recover his memory, she remembers her dead boy and with a tone of grief says "'if my boy had been a cripple – he wasn't; he had the loveliest limbs – and the doctors had said to me, 'We'll straighten your boy's legs for you, but he'll be in pain all the rest of his life,' I'd not have let them touch him ...'" (*Return* 134). Her maternal agony in this example unravels the affinities between her dead boy and Chris's current state. Her statement "I'd not have let them touch him" can be said to refer to women's agony when giving up their children to the war despite their unwillingness to do so. Her son, however, is gone in spite of her attempt to keep him by her side. She expresses the same grief as she resolves to heal Chris's memory. She says:

"I seemed to have to tell them that I knew a way. I suppose it would have been sly to sit there and not tell them. I told them anyhow. But oh! I can't do it. Go out and put an end to the poor love's happiness! After the time he's had, the war and all. And then he'll have to go back there! I can't I can't" (*Return* 135)

Kavka points out that “Given the choice between curing and queering him, between returning Chris to the front and another possible bout of shell shock or retaining him in the infantilization of his “magic circle,” Margret opts for the former” (165). By “queering him” Kavka means leaving him in his abnormal state of the infant. Her ambivalence as seen in this passage is symptomatic of the kind of terror that women experience from within the home space during the war. This represents the case of women who are left in a position of whether to leave the wounded soldier in his state of abnormality and thus enjoy their temporary freedom or restore the patriarchal order and return to perform their activities in the private sphere. By the end of the novel, as Chris is cured, Margaret disintegrates into the shadows as the narrator puts it:

There had fallen a twilight which was a wistfulness of the earth. Under the cedar boughs I dimly saw a figure mothering something in her arms. Almost had she dissolved into the shadows; in another moment the night would have her. With his back turned on this fading happiness Chris walked across the lawn (*Return* 139)

After putting this masculinity into order, she disappears like a ghost who has only come to resolve the unsettled concerns of the masculinity crisis. Maternity, Kavka points out, serves “to uphold the masculine order, and do so, moreover, in tandem with their own dissolution” (15). Moreover, Jean-Michael Rabaté’s definition of the ghost allows us to interpret Margaret’s dissolving nature as phantomatic. He says that the ghost is “a being who may or may not be, who returns only because of some unknown sin or unsettled debt” (51). Given the fact that the ghost often returns to collect an unsettled debt, it becomes possible to suggest that the debt that Margaret – as the *Angel* – comes back for is her uncompleted duty of the maternal. In other words, Margaret functions as an avatar of the *Angel* that

returns with a mission to repair the fading patriarchy⁴⁵. It is arguable in this sense that the debt that the ghost returns to collect is not necessarily harmful, considering that ghosts are known to be violent entities who often return with the intention to punish the victims, usually someone who had wronged them in the past. This can be explained to be women's way to compensate for their feelings of guilt towards sending their men to fight for them. In other words, women are pressured to conform to the maternal position designed for them.

The sense of dilemma overwhelming Margaret is also present in Rezia in *Mrs. Dalloway*. She is thrown into a liminal space between Septimus's world of the dead and the unwelcoming atmosphere of post-war London and between her desire to rescue her marriage and to evade it. Like Margaret, Rezia is in a quest to restore Septimus to his pre-war state. However, her attempts at resurrecting him are not successful as Septimus fails to respond for he is immersed in his own world of the dead.

Women's literary Modernism is characterised by ambivalence towards domesticity in general and the maternal in particular. For instance, Rezia expresses her agony about her marriage and the horror she is living throughout the novel "Horror! horror! she wanted to cry. (She had left her people; they had warned her what would happen.) Why hadn't she stayed at home? she cried, twisting the knob of the iron railing" (*Dalloway* 29), yet she also discloses her anguish about not having children. Woolf then writes: "she must have a son like Septimus, she said". And she also says "One cannot bring children into a world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals" (*Dalloway* 98). Traditionally, the maternal role is one of the active agents of the *Angel*

⁴⁵ Grayzel states that during the war, motherhood was "defined by various wartime figures as women's fundamental contribution to the state" (3).

figure which promotes the domestic confinement of women. The figure still intrudes into modernity through its element of mothering damaged masculinities. The writer's later statement signifies the uncertainty of women towards the notion of motherhood. In a way, this covers mothers' pain and agony as they relinquish their sons to the war only to have them return wounded. Woolf's narrative here recognises the haunting workforce of the Victorian patriarchal maternal role that is forced to re-emerge as women of this period feel the guilt about the deaths and wounding of young men like Septimus. This is made clear in Woolf's words from *Dalloway*: "London had swallowed up many millions of young men called Smith; thought nothing of fantastic Christian names like Septimus with which their parents have thought to distinguish them." (*Dalloway* 92).

Distancing themselves from their past identities, women in these Modernist narratives become other to themselves. Rezia's attempts to step back from her confinement is part of throwing off the *Angel* in her. When Septimus asks her about the reason why she has taken off her ring, she replies "My hand has grown so thin," she said; "I have put it in my purse" (*Dalloway* 73). This scene of hiding her wedding ring in her purse could be symbolic of ejecting the domestic confinement of her marriage, thus ejecting the *Angel*. Refusing to be thrown away, the *Angel* like an abject reappears from its place of eradication to haunt its victim because the abject does not respect boundaries: "it beseeches and pulverizes the subject" (Kristeva 2). Rezia is caught in the terror of the in-betweenness where darkness and uncertainty are its main components; she laments: "But I am so unhappy, Septimus" (*Dalloway* 77).

The liminal space of the trenches and the terror associated with it – often depicted in relation to male characters – becomes symbolic of women's nebulous position during this period. This means that despite the fact that women have had little physical experience of the fight on the Western Front as well as being in the trenches, they face an equal terror

during the war as well as in its aftermath. Both writers developed a Gothic approach in staging the traumatic complexity of women's place during and after the Great War. In other words, the Gothic elements of spectral returns and haunting allow a better understanding of the anxieties of women in post-war Britain. As seen earlier, Mrs. Ramsay and Clarissa are actual mothers who portray a sense of duality that stems from their ambivalent stance about their maternal status. So, by dual self, I mean, the hidden self with its repressed wishes and the social self which they are forced to display to the society. This implies that it is their *Angel* image which is visible to their society. The *Angel* conceals their wishes and renders their position ambivalent. They are, in a way, obliged to conform to its rules as well as to spread its legacy. At the same time, they demonstrate little desire to stray it. The maternal role played by Mrs. Ramsay and Clarissa is also replayed by modern women in the war context. Although Rezia and Margaret do not have any actual children like Mrs. Ramsay and Clarissa, they are reinforced to perform the role of motherhood through nurturing the returned soldier. The sense of liminality that they both experience is also a sign of an ongoing battle within them. In a time when they are supposed to be enjoying some freedom, they are instead pulled back to the house by the *Angel* within them. The latter proves to be not necessarily harmful but becomes a way of demonstrating their input to the war aid.

Chapter Five: “A Phantom in my mind”: The Haunted Spaces of the Inter-War Period in Daphne du Maurier’s Fiction:

Du Maurier’s ghosts are not out there walking the lawns of great houses or riding abroad to meet ill-fated travellers at the crossroads: these are twentieth-century phantoms, walled up inside us – both the best and the worst kind of haunting – called up by ourselves. They are domestic ghosts, the Lares and Penates of the past, sometimes literally attached to old houses (*Light Forever* 187)

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the post-war era was marked by a return of the woman to the house provoking a revival of the infamous Angel in the House trope during and after the Great War. This is particularly brought to light through the women’s task of accommodating returned soldiers damaged by the war; an act that embedded them further in the walls of domesticity. Daphne du Maurier wrote in a period of interwar instability that witnessed a return of women to the domestic space. The return of women to the home space was, particularly, driven by the fear that women might take over male traditional territories. The ‘domestic space’ according to Kathy Mezei and Chiara Briganti “takes into account the material, psychological, spiritual, gendered, social, cultural, and political aspects of house, home, and garden in the context of the everyday and of human relationships within and beyond the house” (3). Du Maurier, as this chapter will discuss in her fiction of the late 1930s, gives a deeper insight into the horrors associated with the domestic space that takes into consideration the psychological state of its female occupants. These domestic spaces, as portrayed by du Maurier, function as shelters for ghosts from the past. Analysing two of Du Maurier’s works, *Jamaica Inn* (1936) and *Rebecca* (1938) will show, I argue, that the

presence of these domestic ghosts is necessary for the female characters to learn about some hidden aspects of their identities in relation to gender concerns of their time.

The Great War opened a vista of work opportunities for many women at the front line, such as working as ambulance drivers and nurses. They had also been involved in other jobs like munitions factories. This allowed them to feel some financial independency that appeared to be short-lived. After the war ended, women's war jobs were claimed back by the returned men, which resulted in a forced return of women to the house. Indeed, in the inter-war period, Deirdre Beddoe states that "when the war ended women were dismissed from the labour force and expected to re-enter traditional women's employment or, better still, to return to the home, 'their proper place'" (48). This propaganda was carried out through magazines advocating for modern femininity. *Good Housekeeping*, for example, was a popular women's magazine that was founded in 1885 with a readership of over two million in the late 1930s. The magazine promoted for the idea that women's sole contribution to the reconstruction of post-war England is through embracing the role of housekeeping (Giles 5). Du Maurier's novels represent female characters that can be seen to reflect the position of those women who had no choice but to accept the return to the domestic space in the 1930s. Du Maurier here draws an inward look at the psychological challenges that her female characters undergo from within the house. Nina Auerbach, in relation to this, notices that:

Daphne du Maurier's woman-centred novels are scarcely soothing, and none lets its heroine rest in a traditional home. *Jamaica Inn* ends with its heroine a vagabond; in *Frenchman's Creek*, Lady Dona's return home is a bitter if inevitable defeat; home in *Rebecca* is an *unheimlich* monstrosity whose only alternative is exile. (5-6)

Many of du Maurier's works focus on women's place in "a traditional home". This might trigger a sense of confusion within readers by the way her female characters seem to conform to the life of domesticity. The domestic setting where she sets the action of her two novels risks a resurgence of Victorian ideals of femininity. Alison Light for example, asserts that du Maurier's works "reassert the unconquerable ties of home and maternity" (167). Nevertheless, it is also noticeable that her traditional homes are not safe havens. The depiction of the houses in these novels demonstrates the way they become settings, rather to demonstrate the feminine terror of being put back in the house in many ways. Gothic themes such as the haunted house and the return of the dead serve du Maurier in addressing women's anxieties regarding this ambivalence and dilemma mirrored in her heroines who are confined within the walls of domesticity. Both heroines of *Rebecca* and *Jamaica Inn* start with no homes. Besides, they equally embark on a journey to what appears to be the "traditional home", displaying for the readers the ways they cope with and challenge the day to day anxieties of place. Gothic has always focused on the image of "women who just can't seem to get out of the house" (DeLamotte 10) since the eighteenth century. This statement continues to be reflected in du Maurier's 1930s fiction. The analysis of *Jamaica Inn* will show the rising parallels that this novel invites with the older forms of Gothic narratives.

Jamaica Inn tells the story of a twenty-three years old Mary Yellan who moves to live with her aunt Patience and her uncle Joss Merlyn after her mother dies. She departs across the wild moors unaware of the mystery awaiting her in her aunt's place. As she arrives, Mary finds her way to the front door of the Inn, where she meets the frightening figure of her uncle Joss Merlyn. She is shocked at how frightened her aunt looks, in a way so different from how she last remembered her. Her aunt acts as a passive female who is trapped under the tyranny of her husband. Mary, on the other hand, features a powerful

modern female who could challenge patriarchy. This is made clear since her arrival in the Inn as well as her firm decision to stay in order to protect her aunt against Joss despite the terror she witnesses in this place. However, as the story unfolds, Mary starts to show a sense of ambivalence in relation to her previous stance of believing that she could challenge her uncle and protect her terrified aunt. This sense of ambivalence develops by the sense of enclosure and entrapment that she experiences during her stay at the Inn. For example, Mary reflects that she and her aunt feel as “in some sense they were here like mice in a trap, unable to escape, with [Joss] playing with them like a monstrous cat” (*Jamaica* 22). This scene recalls an episode in Radcliffe’s *Udolpho*, where Montoni imprisons Emily and her aunt as part of taking revenge from his wife after suspecting a possible plan of her escaping his castle: “when he was called out of the room by some person at the door. As he shut the door, Emily heard him turn the lock, and take out the key; so that Madame Montoni and herself were now prisoners; and she saw that his designs became more and more terrible” (*Udolpho* 291). This passage portrays one of the common themes of Gothic fiction that centre around the imprisonment of vulnerable heroines by the brutal lord of the castle. Du Maurier adopts this Gothic motif of imprisonment in her inter-war novel, perhaps, to discern an analogous experience of inter-war women who were threatened to re-live their ancestors’ life of domestic confinement.

This is further evidenced in the Gothic setting of the Inn which represents a repository for feminine modern fears about their potential freedom. The Inn offers a replication of the hauntings conjured at a Gothic castle: “it was a dark, rambling place, with long passages and unexpected rooms” (*Jamaica* 30). It is also described by the magistrate of the town as “a house of the dead” (*Jamaica* 106). Light argues that through writing about the past, du Maurier is “trying to escape the bounds of gender through historical writing, which can allow for a heroine apparently at a remove from contemporary demands and

behaviours” (173). In spite of the fact that the setting of the novel opposes Modernism, it provides us with a possible reading of the gender conflict of the period where the text has been produced, in parallel with older Gothic thematic expressions. These older forms of the Gothic, such as imprisonment along with the horrific castle, reveal modern Gothic undercurrents significant to the twentieth century gender issues. The writer puts her heroine in a familiar and archaic structured space of the Gothic house away from the chaos of Modernity to figure out precisely those gender issues of her own time in so doing. It is of no surprise that in her biography *Myself when Young* (1977), Du Maurier herself expressed her preference for pastoral life of Cornwall to the noise of London Metropolis and that she experienced freedom in the moors. She says:

Why was it, I used to wonder, that being on my own at Hampstead, Angela in London with friends, Jeanne at her day-school, plunged me, too often, into a fit of depression? Work in the garage-room a toil. Walks on the heath so tame. A general dissatisfaction of mind and body. Yet here in Fowey it was like somebody else. I was never for one moment bored, never depressed [...] it was better to potter in Fowey of a morning, when there were no cars, no visitors (114-15)

This passage supports women’s identification of outdoors with liberty but also implies the dangers of the unknown. The Cornish setting suggests an interpretation that it releases manifestations of freedom. On this point, Horner and Zlosnik suggest that “Daphne’s decamping to Cornwall may be seen as a positive embracing of the rural rather than the urban, the regional rather than the metropolitan” (65). In *Vanishing Cornwall* (1967), du Maurier conceives of Cornwall as a place for freedom: “Freedom to write, to walk, to wander, freedom to climb hills, to pull a boat, to be alone” (du Maurier 6). Given her heroine’s experience in *Jamaica Inn*, however, it is revealed that there is a restricted sense of freedom outdoors. The danger that her female character, in *Jamaica*, faces on the moors

can be said to reflect a wider struggle for space that women were facing in the 1930s. It is arguable that the past in du Maurier's writing in this novel is influenced by the anxieties of post-war England that left an impact on women's place. This is particularly defined by the sense of ambiguity sensed in her narrative in what concerns women's gender roles and confused femininity. Deborah Parsons remarks that "Despite the increased independence and public visibility of women that was gained in the first decades of the twentieth century, the end of the war brought with it a backlash against female emancipation" (125). Indeed, the inter-war period culminated the uncertainty of women's position. This is echoed in the Gothic landscape that dominates the outdoor setting of *Jamaica Inn*. For instance, on her way to the place of Jamaica Inn, Mary reflects upon the Gothic setting of her surroundings which, in a way, resonates with the uncertainty of the inter-war woman⁴⁶:

No trees, no lanes, no cluster of cottages or hamlet, but mile upon mile of bleak moorland, dark and untraversed, rolling like a desert land to some unseen horizon. No human being could live in this wasted country [...]. On wound the road across the dark and silent land, with never a light to waver for an instant as a message of hope to the traveller within the coach. (*Jamaica* 13)

This passage shows the journey of Mary into an unknown territory. Her impressions about the deserted and dark landscape can be linked to the setting of post-war England. Keith B Mitchell points out that landscape is a "physical and multisensory medium ... in which

⁴⁶ Jamaica Inn was built in 1750 and it is located near the village of Altarnun on Bodmin Moor. The idea for the novel came out of an eventful ride on Bodmin Moor in November 1930, when Daphne and her friend Foy Quiller-Couch got lost in the moors and until they saw the lights of Jamaica Inn that they knew they were saved.

cultural meanings and values are encoded” (14). As such, the Gothic landscape in this passage carries out the cultural confusion that England endured witnessing the Victorian values, industrial and scientific progress falter. In addition, Yang and Healey affirm that “disordered landscapes in the Gothic represent the chaos of a culture in transition ... Gothic landscapes are lens by which cultures reflect back their darkness hidden from the light of consciousness” (5). Following Yang and Healey, the Gothic landscapes of “the dark and silent land” of the moors suggests a link with the barren land of the inter-war period which reflects the darkness that prevails in the post-war period. The barren land here refers to the deadness of post-war England that was recovering from the atrocities of the First World War. This is particularly detailed in T.S Eliot’s *Wasteland* 1923 referring to post-war England as a dead land where everything seems to be out of place with an impossibility for it to return to its fertile state. In gender terms, it prefigures the bleak position of women within the chaos of “a culture in transition” and the anxieties associated with it. These include women’s fear of newness and the danger that entails the freedom that they have been fighting for. That women after the war made some achievement in industry and education is true, however, this life of newness was not as easy to adapt to and often was subject to be taken away from them. The anachronistic setting presented in the dark landscapes and deserted moors, which owes to the traditional Gothic legacy of the dark forests and dangerous moors, anticipate a coming danger outside the domestic space⁴⁷. Mary displays signs of discomfort, as such, which lead her to seek safety within the coach:

⁴⁷ An example of the dark landscape can be found in *Udolpho*. After Emily’s father dies, she is taken by her aunt who later marries an Italian man called Montoni. Montoni then takes them to his castle of Udolpho. On their way, Emily observes the surrounding landscapes from the coach window: “The trees, that impended over the high banks of the road and formed a line of perspective with the distant country, now threatened to exclude the view of them; but the blueish mountains still appeared beyond the dark foliage, and Emily

She began to cling to the safety of the coach; at least it had some remnant of familiarity. She had known it since the early morning, and that was long ago. However great a nightmare was this eternal drive, there were at least the four close walls to protect her [...] ahead of her, on the crest, and to the left, was some sort of a building, standing back from the road. She could see tall chimneys, murky dim in the darkness. There was no other house, no other cottage. If this was Jamaica, it stood alone in glory, foursquare to the winds (*Jamaica* 13- 14)

The unfamiliarity of the outer landscape that Mary is exposed to from the coach window has bidden her to seek safety in the “four close walls” of the coach. The coach in this sense is a space of temporary safety for Mary amid the plausible terror of the outside world. This ephemeral safety is interrupted by the scene of the “tall chimneys” of Jamaica Inn which is soon to be a space of entrapment to her. While this is a replication of the clichéd Gothic plot of the threatening haunted castle and female confinement, it is important to contend that Mary is “no fainting heroine. Throughout the novel, she exhibits courage and resourcefulness and frequently expresses a desire for independence in spite of her awareness that for a young and penniless woman the chance of this is remote” (Horner and Zlosnick 73). Further to this, an example of a fainting heroine occurs in *Udolpho* when Emily gets a glimpse of the picture behind the veil in one of the castles’ mysterious rooms and “before she could leave the chamber, she dropped senseless on the floor” (*Udolpho* 294). Another example is when Montoni, after locking her up in a room, Emily “sank

continued to lean from the coach window, till at length the closing branches shut them from her sight” (*Udolpho* 15).

senseless on a couch, by which she had endeavoured to support herself" (*Udolpho* 224). Despite the commonalities of the plots between *Udolpho* and *Jamaica Inn*, it is evident that Mary's character in *Jamaica Inn* differs from Emily's. This indicates further the idea that Mary characterises the post-war woman's continuous efforts of empowerment and emancipation. She exhibits characteristics of courage and strength in the way that she stands up and challenges her brutal uncle Joss Merlyn as soon as he tries to intimidate her:

"I tell you what it is, Mary Yellan," he shouted. "I'm master in this house, and I'll have you know it. You'll do as you're told, and help in the house and serve my costumers, and I'll not lay a finger on you. But, by God, if you open your mouth and squark, I'll break you until you eat out of my hand the same as your aunt yonder" (*Jamaica* 22)

"I understand you", she said [...] "I'll do my work about the house and you'll have no cause to grumble. But if you hurt my Aunt Patience in any way, I tell you this – I'll leave Jamaica Inn straight away, and I'll find the magistrate, and bring him here, and have the law on you; and then try and break me if you like" (*Jamaica* 22)

The character of Joss is a patriarchal figure that attempts to reinsure Mary's fulfilment of domestic duties. In the historical context of the 1930s, this character's behaviour, as seen from the first passage, can be said to resonate with the way the society of 1930s was trying to restore the pre-war patriarchal order by insisting upon the image of the dutiful woman. Adrian Bingham in this view argues that "A post-war 'backlash' meant that traditional gender dichotomies were re-established, and an ethos of 'domesticity' pervaded popular culture" (225). Ordering Mary to stick to her house duties and to keep silent suggests this "postwar 'backlash'". Mary's attitude, on the other hand, shows a sense of strength, specifically, in the way that she blackmails him should he harm her aunt. The sense of

responsibility to protect her aunt and the way she challenges Joss characterise her as a modern female Gothic. Kathy Mezei and Chiara Briganti argue that

The turn to the home and the domestic interior between the wars and a corresponding turn in the novel form is hardly surprising. Similarly to the eighteenth century, which saw the rise of the novel, the interwar period also experienced a domestication, feminization, and privatisation of society. (327)

The affinity between the eighteenth-century novel and the inter-war novel – in addition to the Gothic setting that reflects modern concerns – occurs in du Maurier's presentation of the two opposing characters through aunt Patience and Mary Yellan. Aunt Patience comes to represent the passive and submissive woman character that is similar to the eighteenth-century female Gothic. Aunt Patience's character bears a striking similarity to Gothic heroines like King Manfred's wife Hippolita from Walpole's *Otranto* and Madam Montoni from Radcliffe's *Udolpho*. In *Otranto* for example, Hippolita represents the icon of the submissive and dutiful wife who endures her husband's brutality and even silently obeys his wish to divorce her⁴⁸. The character of Mary, by contrast, encompasses opposite traits that occur in the way that she resists her uncle's fearful orders and expresses: "I'll not show fear before Joss Merlyn or any other man" (*Jamaica* 52).

Mary's aunt is a vulnerable female character that is represented by the writer in this way, perhaps, for Mary to have vivid images of the ostensible horrors that emanate from

⁴⁸ An example of Hippolita's passive nature occurs when she learns about her husband's wish to divorce her. She thinks: "I will go and offer myself to this divorce—it boots not what becomes of me [...] It is not ours to make election for ourselves; heaven, our fathers, and our husbands, must decide for us." (*Otranto* 88)

domesticity and the life of marriage. As the story progresses, Mary reveals a state of ambivalence regarding domesticity. To explain, at the beginning of the novel, Mary is shown as a strong and an independent female who does a man's work and who can live on her own without expecting help from men. Mary says to her mother before her death "I am strong, I can do a man's work you know that" (*Jamaica* 6). As she moves to Jamaica Inn, she is introduced to the harshness of marriage and domestic life and how it is like to live under man's control. This impression is further confirmed by the changed nature of her aunt from a cheerful and beautiful woman to a "living ghost" (*Jamaica* 223) and in the presence of her husband Joss, Mary reflects "a strange expression crept upon the woman's face, and her great hollow eyes stared across the table in terror. Her mouth trembled, and her hand wandered to her throat. She looked fearful, haunted" (*Jamaica* 35).

Living with aunt Patience, Mary is presented with a visual reality of the horrors of domesticity introduced by Gothic images. As she becomes witness of her aunt's physical and psychological decay, Mary develops an anxiety towards the possibility of becoming like her aunt during her sojourn at Jamaica Inn. That is to say, Joss is not the only source of fear at the Inn but also her aunt who goes into "pieces like a frightened child" (*Jamaica* 29) at the presence of her husband, Joss. "Was this poor tattered creature the bewitching Aunt Patience of her dreams, dressed now like a slattern, and twenty years her age" (*Jamaica* 18), the figure of Mary's aunt can be said to chronicle the anxieties of the modern woman's return to the domestic imprisonment. This is to say that the fear of women in the 1930s is that to become prisoners of patriarchy was a legacy of being a woman that they cannot avoid. Seeing it in an older relative confirms this horror for Mary. Light points out:

The writings by women in the inter-war years played a crucial part in bringing buried anxieties and desires about older forms of domesticity to the surface and in voicing just how much the women of the middle classes had suffered from being identified with, and shut up in, the home. (219)

Aunt Patience represents a reversion in women to the “older forms of domesticity”. Mary’s sense of courage and independence is thereby interrupted by her task of protecting her aunt and this forces her to embrace the same domestic prison. Aunt Patience becomes like “a living ghost” (*Jamaica* 223) after ten years of living under the tyranny of her husband, Joss. The female modern reader here is presented with visual realities of a domestic life that is not necessarily different from her own position. The theme of female imprisonment is a familiar Gothic device in eighteenth and nineteenth-century fictions. *Jamaica Inn* shows how the use of this thematic device tallies with the concerns of the subject matter of women’s return to domesticity which was being promoted by the government’s plans to preserve and restore old orders. The domestic values have been encouraged through magazines and newspapers and above all the application of the government’s policies such as the marriage bar which dismissed women from the workplace (Beddoe 3). These plans of re-domesticating women were met with agreement from some feminists causing a division in the feminist movement and ultimately evoking ambiguity in regard to women’s position during this period. The 1930s witnessed a conflict within the feminist movement as the battle is no longer between men and women but between women themselves. Light in this account indicates that the inter-war novel “detects a tension between women” (12). Indeed, the tension between the old and new feminists is what makes the position of the modern woman complex and ambiguous. While the new feminists worked towards bettering the condition of marriage life and domesticity, old feminists saw it as an attempt of restoring the patriarchal order of the past. In relation to the novel, the archetype image

of aunt Patience can be said to represent the attempt of those women who showed agreement about the return to the box, therefore, risk restoring the patriarchal order of the past with its elements of imprisonments and horror. Mary, on the other hand, shows the dilemma that grows out of these complex feminist views. Indeed, throughout the novel, Mary takes on a quite masculine side but also expresses the danger of releasing it. This appears in the narrative when she expresses her frustration about her weak position in front of Joss:

Had she been a man, she would have gone downstairs and challenged Joss Merlyn to his face, and his friends with him. Yes, and fought them too, and drawn blood if she were lucky. And then away on a horse from the stable, with Aunt Patience riding pillion, and so down to the south again, to the friendly Helford shore (*Jamaica* 51)

“I’ll not show fear before Joss Merlyn or any man,” she said, “and, to prove it, I will go down now, in the dark passage, and take a look at them in the bar, and if he kills me it will be my own fault.” (*Jamaica* 52)

This takes place in an episode of the novel where Mary becomes a witness to a murder incident that her uncle has committed in one of the secret rooms of the Inn. The first passage shows the desire of Mary towards having a masculine self that would allow her to challenge her uncle and escape the confines of the Inn. The second passage shows an attempt to embrace such masculine side. Going through “the dark passages” of the Inn represents the sense of feminine entrapment that Mary seeks to repress. Despite the strength Mary tends to show, her vulnerable feminine side creeps over her desire and, thereby, evokes reluctance. As she goes downstairs filled with terror, “Mary was tempted to climb the stairs again to her bedroom and seek safety in sleep” (*Jamaica* 53).

Because of the apparent menacing domesticity portrayed in the Inn, Mary seeks freedom in the outside space of the moors. While the moors are supposed to offer a sense

of freedom outside the domestic space of the Inn, it is soon revealed that they are contaminated by other threats. The traditional Gothic trope of heroines' imprisonment in locked chambers where they are sexually harassed finds its correlation in the threats of the Gothic landscape of the moors in *Jamaica Inn*⁴⁹. Young and Healey point out that "disordered landscapes in the Gothic represent the chaos of a culture in transition" (5). Certainly, the threats that face Mary as she walks in the moors come to represent the insecurities of women outside the home, signalling a disillusioned future. One instance of this is the incident of a rape attempt that Mary confronts when she is attacked by one of Joss's men called Harry the Pedlar when she has been walking in the moors:

They fought on the ground, she straining away from him, her hands tearing at his face, but in a moment he was too strong for her, and, rolling her over on her side, he twisted his hands in her hair, pulling at the roots, until the pain forced her to stillness [...] he was fighting now for possession, and she knew it, and aware that his strength was greater than hers and must prevail in the end, she lay limp suddenly, to deceive him, giving him the advantage for the moment. He grunted in triumph, relaxing his weight, which was what she intended, and as he moved his position and lowered his head she jabbed at him swiftly with the full force of her knee, at the same time thrusting her fingers in his eyes. (*Jamaica* 181-82)

⁴⁹ An example of rape acts appears in the famous Gothic novel of Lewis's *the Monk* where Ambrosio so blinded with love and sexual desire for an innocent young lady called Antonia is tempted to satisfy his sexual desire by attempting to rape her when she is asleep: "He reached the door of Antonia's chamber. He stopped and listened. All was hushed within. The total silence persuaded him that his intended Victim was retired to rest [...] Ambrosio advanced with precaution. He took care that not a board should creak under his foot, and held in his breath He approached the Bed [...] his desires were raised to that frantic height, which Brutes are agitated. He resolved not to delay for one instant longer the accomplishment of his wishes, and hastily proceeded to tear off those garments, which impeded the gratification of his lust" (*Monk* 299-300-301).

The dark future for modern women emanates from the uncertainty surrounding the clash between private and public spaces. This clash will be further expressed in my next chapter on Jean Rhys. The transgressive nature of Mary that she has exhibited throughout her stay at Jamaica Inn is not only undermined from within the Inn but also outside it. The fight between her and the pedlar, in the passage above, can be symbolic of a fight over public space. The statement of “he was fighting now for possession” is not limited to bodily possession only but can also refer to spatial possession. Despite the fact that Mary has been able to free herself from him, the fear she has displayed after this incident of attempted rape signifies the ongoing battle over place outside the home: “then she turned again, and began to run like a hunted thing up the twisting lane, her mouth open, her hands outstretched, tripping and stumbling over the ruts in the path [...] her one idea to escape from the thing that was Harry the pedlar.” (*Jamaica* 182). Mary refers to this man as “the thing” which dehumanises him, indicating further terror. When she is finally in her bedroom at Jamaica Inn, she expresses a sort of relief away from “the thing”:

She was lying in her bedroom at Jamaica Inn.

The sight of this room she hated, however cold it was and dreary, was at least protection from the wind and the rain, and from the hands of Harry the pedlar. Nor could she hear the sea. The roar of surf would not disturb her again. If death came now, he would be an ally; existence was not a thing she welcomed anymore (*Jamaica* 193)

The room that imprisoned and revolted her at the beginning has turned to a place of protection from the endangered moors. In an earlier passage in the novel where Mary gets lost in the moors, she thinks: “the tall grey chimneys of Jamaica Inn would be, for the first time perhaps in their existence, a welcoming and consoling sight” (*Jamaica* 94). It is this

dilemma facing Mary that makes the link with the 1930s women's experience possible to highlight. Because the outer spaces offer no escape or protection for women, they find themselves back into the house. The desire of being more powerful as well as her transgressive behaviour that occur in her adventurous walks in the moors are curtailed by the danger of freedom of the outside world. In other words, whereas she seems to give more focus on the horrors behind marriage and confinement of domestic life, du Maurier also draws upon women's possible dangers should they possess the freedom outside that domestic world which is also the case for the position of many women in the post-war era.

Mary appears to have been more independent and respected at her hometown Helston. She thinks "the old life lay behind – the dear familiar farm and the shining Helford waters. Before her lay the future – and Jamaica Inn." (*Jamaica* 9). Her adventure in Jamaica Inn reveals other realities for her that thwart her sense of independence. Her journey here symbolises the inter-war period woman's ambiguous journey in a period that witnessed complexity concerning women's position. This complexity originates from the dissolving nature of the feminist movement after the Great War as its efforts waned. In addition to the emerging ideologies that valorised marriage, the split in the feminist movement to new feminists and old feminists aggravated the confusion within the woman of the 1930s. Given the differing views of these two sanctions as the former encouraged women's reproductive system thus advocated for marriage and motherhood and marking them as a necessity for achieving further gains and the latter resonate with the policies of the New Woman that are independence outside the world of marriage (Tolaini 5). Added to the sense of independence and autonomy she shows throughout the novel, Mary rejects marriage and shows a commitment to lead an independent life without the help of a man. Her attitude is symbolic of the *fin de siècle* New Woman's ideology that conforms to old feminists' stance. This can be noticed in the way she reflects: "Anyway, she would never marry; it was a long

while since she had decided that. She would save money in some way, and do a man's work on a farm." (*Jamaica* 135).

Mary's view of leading an independent life becomes uncertain when she meets Jem Merlyn, Joss's brother, with whom she falls in love. Jem is a horse thief and lives like a vagabond and does not have a place of his own. He proposes that Mary joins him in his unknown wanderings in the outside world: "If you were a man I'd ask you to come with me" (*Jamaica* 300). Noting that Jem is a liminal figure who lives on the road, instead of marrying him, Mary decides to enter Jem's uncanny spaces by accompanying him in his unknown voyage outside Cornwall. Zlosnik and Horner clarify that "seen for the most part not in the Gothic spaces of the Inn. But in the open air, on the moors or in the convivial atmosphere of the fair at Launceston. He is therefore dissociated from the Gothic villain." (79). It means that the character of Jem opposes the villainous traits of his brother Joss. Hence, he is distanced from the characterization of domestic patriarchy that his brother practices. Therefore, Mary's acceptance to accompany him does not mean an acceptance of domesticity but rather an acceptance of liminality. This is made clear in the following conversation between Jem and Mary:

"What now?" he said. "And where do you want me to take you? You have your back to Helford, do you know that?"

"Yes, I know," she said.

"If you come with me it will be a hard life, and a wild one at times, Mary, with no biding anywhere, and little rest and comfort. Men are ill companions when the mood takes them, and I, God knows, the worst of them. You'll get a poor exchange for your farm, and a small prospect of the peace you crave"

“I’ll take the risk, Jem [...] because I want to; because I must; because now and for ever more this is where I belong to be.” Said Mary (*Jamaica* 301)

It has been argued, by contrast, that Mary’s acceptance of travelling with Jem is an affirmation of domestic acceptance. Auerbach, for instance, points out that “Mary’s acceptance of love is a declaration of defeat” (106) and she also adds that the ending of the novel was “an awkward attempt at feminine affirmation” (107). While this might seem to be true, it is essentially remarkable that Mary has tried to lead a life free of domestic restrictions and marriage. Her ending as a travelling vagabond with Jem, by contrast, affirms her revulsion to married life and the horrors of the indoor spaces offer. Light accuses du Maurier’s works of being about conservative modernity in the ways that her women surrender to live within the safety of the four walls of the home (168). The “four walls” of the domestic space of the Inn only promise temporary safety away from the harshness of the open space. The ending of her female character on the road proves further this point in the way that the writer rather suggests a possible freedom in the unknown spaces of liminality where Mary feels she belongs. The next section will discuss her famous novel *Rebecca* that was published two years later. This novel will give more insights of domestic terror at the house that the female character moves to. This house called Manderley appears to be haunted by a female ghost from the past which compels the narrator to raise questions about her identity and renders her marriage an ambivalent experience as she ultimately ends up in a similar space of liminality as Mary. The appeal of the Gothic in this novel figures as a way for the writer to exorcise hidden aspects of the narrator’s self concerning her position at Manderley.

The novel *Rebecca* opens with a flashback. The narrator lives with her husband from one hotel to another, harbouring memories of their house, Manderley, which we learn has been burned down. She says: “we have both known fear, and loneliness, and very great

distress. I suppose sooner or later in the life of everyone comes a moment of trial” (*Rebecca* 5). The narrator tells the story of how she has met Max de Winter in Monte Carlo hotel on a trip to Southern France. She is a young girl who works as a travelling companion to an American woman named Mrs Van Hopper. She remains nameless throughout the story, which can be interpreted as a sign of her lack of a solid identity. In a discussion with Max de Winter, he asks her what she would do about her future in case Mrs Van Hopper gets tired of her. She responds:

There would be other Mrs Van Hoppers [...] But even as he spoke I remembered those advertisements seen in good class magazines where a friendly society demands succour for young women in reduced circumstances; I thought of the type of boarding-house that answers the advertisement and gives temporary shelter, and then I saw myself, useless sketch-book in hand, without qualifications of any kind... (*Rebecca* 29)

This passage is an indication of her “deject” (Kristeva 8) position and shows that the only available alternatives of place at that time is the “type of boarding house” that offers a “temporary shelter” to women. Historically, the nameless character’s position reflects the position of many women who were caught in transient spaces because of the complexity around the notion of home and domesticity in the 1930s. The boarding house has become a space that the unmarried women in this period were bound to, simply because it is free of domestic commitments. However, its temporality remains uncertain and does not promise a long term stability. The “deject” according to Kristeva is something that is rejected hence occupies an in-between space. The fact that the narrator is nameless gestures towards this deject position which also means alienation. The narrator’s journey in this novel is similar to Mary’s of *Jamaica Inn* in the way that they equally mirror the nature of returning to the home space in trying to find a place of fixity.

In an attempt to achieve a lasting stability and have a name for herself, the narrator accepts Mr. de Winter's proposal of marriage. However, her acceptance is shaded by a feeling of unrest and discomfort. Her journey in Manderley house, I argue, is a way for the narrator to come to terms with her identity that seems to be absent at the beginning of the novel. Having said this, the narrator traverses realms of psychological conflicts with the ghost of her husband's dead wife called Rebecca. The act of haunting here leads her to discover hidden desires about her identity. Hence, while her acceptance of marriage could be seen as an acceptance of domesticity, I argue, the marriage element in this novel permits her to gradually learn about her desires through the ghost of Rebecca.

On first arriving at Manderley, the narrator enters a moral conflict with Maxim's dead wife Rebecca. Before her death, Rebecca has been powerful and an independent woman. The narrator, on the other hand, is presented as a vulnerable and has a passive character. It is also important to notice that despite her acceptance of marriage, the narrator has been showing a sense of reluctance and fear about the idea of marriage. On her way to Manderley, she thinks: "I dreaded this arrival at Manderley as much as I had longed for it in theory. Now the moment was upon me I wished it delayed. I wanted to draw up at some wayside inn and stay there, in a coffee-room, by an impersonal fire. I wanted to be a traveller on the road." (*Rebecca* 69). This shows a sense of ambivalence between her wanting to live independently "on the road" and living in the enclosed space of Manderley. Manderley, despite of the sense of imprisonment that it offers to the narrator, as will be seen in this chapter, it functions as a Gothic platform that enlightens the narrator about her unknown ambitions. This means that the element of the haunted house here shall not be taken as a harming one, as the kind of haunted mansions found in *Otranto* and *Udolpho*, because the motif of the ghost here returns to demonstrate modern attributes of independent femininity and strength that the narrator has to embrace. It might seem from the surface

that the narrator's journey to Manderley risks restoring the patriarchal system of past times through her weakness and compliant passivity because of her hasty acceptance of Mr de Winter's marriage proposal. Nevertheless, her sojourn at Manderley is not a durable one for she is put there to embrace an identity that was initially unknown to her. This is achieved when she becomes unconsciously haunted by the ghost of Rebecca. So, the house of Manderley is a domestic setting that necessarily disrupts the narrator's concept of gender and femininity rather than accommodating it.

The haunting device in this novel invites Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's concept of "the crypt" coined in their essay "Mourning or Melancholia: Introjection versus Incorporation" (1972) for it helps our understanding of the origins of the ghost that haunts the narrator and at the same time explains how the seemingly threatening ghost of Rebecca turns to be an informative ghost. By informative, I mean that the ghost is there to direct and guide the narrator to learn about her feminist stand. This also means that the type of ghost highlighted in this section is not the dangerous type for the female narrator but turns out to be a constructive ghost revenant that is settled in a crypt in the narrator's subject.

The crypt refers to a mode of "the survival of the dead in one's unconsciousness" (Davis 77). The crypt is described by Abraham and Torok as a kind of a tomb or a vault accommodating "the other" within one's unconsciousness. It results, they argue, from a refusal to mourn the dead of a loved one (3). In explaining Abraham and Torok's concept, Davis clarifies that the crypt can emerge in two ways, according to Abraham and Torok. The first one, they state, is transgenerational and that is where the patient becomes haunted by something which is not part of his experience meaning that he becomes the holder of someone else's trauma. This is to say that he becomes haunted by the secrets of his ancestors (Davis 77)). The second one is constituted when the patient refuses to mourn the

death of a loved one. The deceased then reformulates itself in a form of a tomb located at the heart of the ego without the subject's conscious knowledge.

The text under study calls for the second concept with a twist, adding an element of transmission to it. That is to say that Mrs Danvers is the original source of encrypting Rebecca's ghost. Mrs Danvers is the housekeeper of Manderley estate and was Rebecca's maid. Mrs Danvers has accompanied Rebecca to Manderley after her marriage. After her death, Mrs Danvers reinsures to keep Manderley estate in the same state as it was when Rebecca was alive. She exhibits an obsession with Rebecca's character. This is born from the fact that she has not fully overcome the death of Rebecca. The obsession she shows in addition to the way in which she continuously tries to keep Rebecca alive through memory explains that she actually encrypts her ghost in her unconsciousness because of not bearing the reality of her death.

Whereas Mrs Danvers 's character is not the focus of my study here, she acts as a starting point of transmitting Rebecca's ghost onto the narrator. The narrator, through Mrs Danvers, absorbs the phantom and encrypts it within her unconsciousness and there keeps it alive. The narrator at this stage begins to show symptoms of being haunted and struggles thereby to free herself from it. Until the subject recognizes this other within it, it suffers from it in the sense that the phantom constantly disturbs the individual. Davis explains:

The secrets of Abraham's and Torok's lying phantoms are unspeakable in the restricted sense of being a subject of shame and prohibition. It is not at all that they cannot be spoken; on the contrary, they can and should be put into words so that the phantom and its noxious effects on the living can be exorcized. (58)

The secret of Rebecca's phantom in this story is "unspeakable" in the way that Mr. de Winter tries to keep it hidden by avoiding to speak about it. Rebecca's secret is linked to "a subject of shame and prohibition" as Davis explains. This is because of her unnatural

character that deviates from the norms that the patriarchal society aims to re-establish after the Great War. The phantom has to be spoken about so that the individual is freed from its haunting effect. The haunted subject in this case is the narrator.

It is also crucial to add that the phantom starts from a certain loss as Abraham and Torok argue. This allows us to suggest that Rebecca's death can be said to symbolise the loss of women's freedom or the hopes that the Victorian woman looked upon and wished to possess, Auerbach in this view, points out that du Maurier "raises the ghosts of Charlotte and Emily Brontë to dispel their hopes" (116). This means that the ideals of independence and autonomy that Victorian women had been longing to achieve are presented by du Maurier here, through characteristics of independence which I will return to later in this section, only to dismiss their hopes through Rebecca's death. Rebecca's death represents a metaphorical death of these ideals that disappear with her death. The ghostly return of Rebecca, in this way, suggests a possible revival of these ideals. This also implies that the act of haunting that the narrator experiences is a way for her to learn about and embrace these traits that are thought to have been vanished with Rebecca's death.

To begin with, the phantom of Rebecca is already incorporated by Mrs Danvers. Incorporation results from a grief that cannot be articulated. Indeed, Mrs Danvers refuses to accept Rebecca's death as she ensures reviving her through memory. In this way, she internalises the phantom of Rebecca because she cannot express her grief. Besides, through encrypting her phantom, she acts as a protector of Rebecca's ideals. This finds its example in the scene where she shows the house to the narrator. The narrator reflects on the way Mrs Danvers's tone and countenance change as she talks about Rebecca: "her voice, which had hitherto, as I said, been dull and toneless, was harsh now with unexpected animation, with life and meaning, and there was a spot of colour on the gaunt cheekbones" (*Rebecca* 81). The fact that her seemingly dead face turns alive when reviving Rebecca's memory is

an indication of her idealisation of her. She idealises her strength, freedom and authority. For example, she explains to the narrator that Rebecca and Mr de Winter “‘used to live in the west wing and use those rooms when Mrs de Winter was alive. That big room, I was telling you about, that looked down to the sea, was Mrs de Winter’s bedroom’” (*Rebecca* 84). By insisting that Rebecca used to live in the west wing of the house signifies that the west wing is superior to the east wing where the narrator will be staying. What is more, the fact that Rebecca’s room looks down to the sea foreshadows the image of the sea as a space of freedom for Rebecca considering that before her death, she has seemed to experience her moments of freedom when she was sailing in her boat. The point that her room “looked down to the sea” gestures towards an assumption that it is a sign of freedom that Mrs Danvers idealises. Further to this, the narrator, by contrast, has been given a guest room that looks down to a rose garden instead. With a tone of disappointment, the narrator asks Mrs Danvers:

“You can’t see the sea from here, then,” I said, turning to Mrs Danvers.

“No, not from this wing,” she answered; “you can’t even hear it, either. You would not know the sea was anywhere near, from this wing.”

She spoke in a peculiar way, as though something lay behind her words, and she laid an emphasis on the words ‘this wing’, as if suggesting that the suite where she stood now held some inferiority. (*Rebecca* 79)

First, the guest room seems to be a confining domestic space in comparison to the west wing. Also, giving her a room in the east wing can be said to be part of Mr de Winter’s plan of dismantling the dangerous freedom that the narrator might gain, noting that he has chosen to marry her because she is innocent and vulnerable. By instructing Mrs Danvers, hence, to give her the room in the east wing, Mr de Winter ensures to keep the narrator’s

vulnerability under guard. After Mrs Danvers has left, the narrator wanders in the house internalising Rebecca's phantom in her unconsciousness. She reflects

Unconsciously, I shivered as though someone had opened the door behind me and let a draught into the room. I was sitting in Rebecca's chair, I was leaning against Rebecca's cushion, and the dog had come to me and laid his head upon my knee because that had been his custom, and he remembered, in the past, she had given sugar to him there (*Rebecca* 87)

Rebecca's phantom begins to transmit to the narrator at this level in the way that she feels her presence wherever she goes. The expression of "as though someone had opened the door behind me" can be metaphorical of someone unlocking the boundaries of her unconsciousness for Rebecca's phantom to reside there. This haunting aspect sees its symptoms in the sense of ambivalence she starts to experience regarding her marriage life. For instance, she starts to experience a sense of an uncanny freedom when she is on her own in Manderley noticing:

Now that Maxim was safe in London, and I had eaten my biscuits, I felt very well and curiously happy. I was aware of a sense of freedom, as though I had no responsibilities at all [...] I had not felt like this all the time I had been at Manderley. It must be because Maxim had gone to London.

I was rather shocked at myself. I could not understand it at all. I had not wanted him to go. And now this lightness of heart, this spring in my step, this childish feeling that I wanted to run across the lawn, and roll down the bank [...]. Perhaps I was just feeling like this because it was a lovely day ... (*Rebecca* 169)

Unaware, the narrator begins to identify with Rebecca's phantom, in that she unconsciously comes to identify with a desire for freedom and independence outside the constraints of

marriage. The temporary freedom she feels when she is on her own is a sign of this. Davis explains that during encryment “in the unconscious or pre-conscious, I know neither that it is there nor what it hides” (78). Her unawareness of the phantom within her lies in her doubtful statement of “It must be because Maxim had gone to London” or that she has had this feeling simply because “it was a lovely day”. The narrator at this level is ignorant of the presence of Rebecca’s phantom in her unconscious which leads her to question the whereabouts of this unfamiliar sense of freedom. Her acceptance of marriage at the start of the novel turns to uncertainty because she is gradually learning about her desires such as having a degree of independent moments away from the surveillance that Mr de Winter, usually, imposes on her at Manderley estate.

Another aspect of Rebecca’s haunting effect is the narrator’s obsession with her handwriting. The handwriting is argued to signify “an enduring autonomy” (Horner and Zlosnick 107). Further to this point, the theme of the handwriting in this novel has a symbolic significance to the subject of education towards which the narrator gradually develops a desire. The narrator engages in a psychological battle against Rebecca’s haunting signature presented in the letter R, which she encountered in a book poem that belongs to Rebecca. She tries to destroy the letter R by burning one of its pages:

I cut the page right out of the book. I left no jagged edges, and the book looked white and clean when the page was gone. A new book, that had not been touched. I tore the page up in many little fragments and threw them into the waste-paper basket. Then I went and sat on the window seat again. But I kept thinking of the torn scraps in the basket once more. Even now the ink stood up on the fragments thick and black, the writing was not destroyed. I took a box of matches and set fire to the fragments. The flame had a lovely light, staining the paper, curling the edges, making the slanting writing impossible to distinguish. The fragments fluttered to grey ashes. The letter R

was the last to go, it twisted in the flame, it curled outwards for a moment, becoming larger than ever. Then it crumpled too; the flame destroyed it [...] I felt better much better (*Rebecca* 63-64)

Her first endeavour to destroy the letter R fails as “the ink stood up on the fragments thick and black”. This imagery gestures to the autonomy of Rebecca’s handwriting hence her educational level. The letter R refuses to be destroyed and emerges from the rest of the fragments evoking a certain power that refuses to be curtailed. Thinking she has finally managed to get rid of it, she experiences a relief which turns out to be short lived because the letter keeps reoccurring to her. The narrator deduces that this haunting incident is a threat from an outsider entity that she fails to understand. It is her unawareness of the phantom within her that leads her to believe that this other within her subject is something dangerous. To her surprise, the letter reoccurs again when she is walking around the study room pondering upon Rebecca’s desk and imagining the way she would have written her letters. She thinks that Rebecca:

began her letters, five, six, seven perhaps to be answered, all written in that same curious, slating hand I knew so well. She would tear off sheet after sheet of that smooth white paper, using it extravagantly, because of the long strokes she made when she wrote, and at the end of each of her personal letters she put her signature, ‘Rebecca’, that tall sloping R dwarfing its fellows (*Rebecca* 97)

With an inner struggle, the narrator decides to sit and write a letter herself. She begins:

“Dear Mrs Van Hopper”, I began. And as I wrote, in halting, laboured fashion, saying I hoped the voyage had been good, that she had found her daughter better, that the weather in New York was fine and warm, I noticed for the first time how cramped and unformed was my own handwriting; without individuality, without style, uneducated even, the writing of an indifferent pupil taught in a second-rate school. (*Rebecca* 98)

In examining these two passages, one can see that the narrator starts to gather knowledge about her powerlessness which is symbolised in her handwriting “without individuality, without style, uneducated even”. This can be explained in historical terms. During the inter-war period, education was limited to a minority. Because this period has lived an economic crisis, the educational system was affected, eventually. Beddoe adds that “the inter-war years saw stringent economies in education service and class sizes were fixed at a minimum of fifty” (35). In gender terms, only few girls have had access to higher education and the education of most working-class women “was designed to turn them into wives and mothers” (Beddoe 35). Although Rebecca seems to fulfil the criteria of a good housewife, she is not a woman who is restricted by home services. This is particularly supported by her rebellious nature and the fact that she used to spend most of her time in her cottage outside Manderley and in London. The narrator asks Mr de Winter: ““Did she use it a great deal?”” (*Rebecca* 144). De Winter replies: ““Yes,’ he said. ‘Yes, she did. Moonlight picnics, and – and one thing and another.’” (*Rebecca* 144). This implies that Rebecca had an independent life outside Manderley which signals her autonomy. Also, the emphasis on the ideal handwriting and the way she draws her R signifies her superior educational position that the narrator lacks and consequently becomes seduced by. Horner and Zlosnik state that the sloping R represents the power of writing which is “associated with strength for women, a strength that is desired, since it is connected with power, control and visibility” (110).

The narrator's position, on the other hand is reduced in learning house services and caring for her husband. Her awareness of her educational inadequacy is highlighted by Rebecca's phantom with its elements of the sloping R that refuses to be dispelled. For Abraham and Torok, the phantom with its secrets needs to be recognized and thus unravelled in order to be dispelled (Davis 379). In other words, for the narrator to free herself from this phantom, she has to recognize and embrace her desires including identity, independence outside the home and achieving same powerful educational level as Rebecca. The symbolism of education through the element of the handwriting here means that education resists the idea of putting women back in tradition and further raises inner questions in the narrator concerning her married life.

The narrator, effectively, starts trying to understand the phantom within her by asking questions about Rebecca. This, eventually, will lead her to uncover her hidden identity, but until this is attained, she has to live through a tormenting experience. Frosh's insights on ghostly transmissions are similar to Abraham and Torok's study in that he explains that haunting is like "a message from the past of what the future will become if we do nothing about it" (168). Indeed, Rebecca comes from the past with a message for the narrator to change her current passive position that only nourishes her confinement within the domestic space of Manderley. Rebecca's phantom acts as an alerting device that drives the narrator to examine and question her current position. She gathers the courage and starts to collect information about Rebecca, from the bishop's wife for example, who has come to the estate to pay "respect to the bride" (*Rebecca* 136). The narrator asks her:

“Rebecca must have been a wonderful person.”

I could not believe that I had said the name at last. I waited, wondering what could happen. I had said the name. I had said the word Rebecca aloud. It was a tremendous relief. It was as though I had taken a purge and rid myself of an intolerable pain. Rebecca. I had said it aloud. (*Rebecca* 139).

Frosh explains that “what troubles us now is laid at the feet of a ghost; that ghost must be identified, appeased and put to rest. This is not just a matter of naming it but also of understating it in a very particular and comprehensive way” (38). In relation to Frosh’s point, having pronounced Rebecca’s name out loud, the narrator starts experiencing moments of “tremendous relief”. However, this appears to be momentary because she is still unaware of Rebecca’s crypt inside her. She repeats Rebecca’s name out loud when she is with Frank Crawley, the manager and businessman of the Manderley estate, as she asks him about the last fancy ball organised by Rebecca:

“I suppose”, I said carelessly, “Rebecca did most of it?”

I looked straight ahead if me along the drive, but I could see his face was turned towards me, as though he wished to read my expression.

[...] “I’m afraid I should not be much use if we have a dance,” I said, “I’m no earthly use at organizing anything.”

“There would be no need for you to do anything,” he said, “you would just be yourself and look decorative.” (*Rebecca* 143)

The narrator here is aware of her inadequacy and unsure of whether she will manage to organise the ball in the same successful way that Rebecca has done. She compares herself to Rebecca with a tone that shows a longing desire for being as influential as her in organising the ball event. Then she continues to narrate:

We were silent then. We went on walking along the drive. Now that I had broken down my reluctance at saying Rebecca's name, first with the bishop's wife and now with Frank Crawley, the urge to continue was strong within me. It gave me a curious satisfaction, it acted upon me like a stimulant. I knew that in a moment or two I should have to say it again. (*Rebecca* 143)

Her statements show further the brief sense of relief and "satisfaction" that she senses when pronouncing Rebecca's name. She further admits, "sometimes I felt Rebecca was real to me as she was to Mrs Danvers" (*Rebecca* 153). It is at this level that the narrator begins to recognise the fact that she has encrypted an object of idolatry within her. This object of idolatry is Rebecca's phantom which has been transferred to her by Mrs Danvers's way of endless idealisation of her. Pronouncing her name besides her little investigations about Rebecca's past mean that she has allowed herself to communicate her cryptic desires of obtaining Rebecca's characteristics of success and superiority.

Gradually, the narrator, unconsciously, absorbs Rebecca's identity. This occurs in the episode where she decides to hold her first public event at Manderley. After a struggle to come up with an original costume, she ends up following Mrs Danvers's suggestion to model her costume after the portrait of Carolyn de Winter, a sister of Maxim's great-great-grandfather. In fact, it turns out, it is this same costume that Rebecca had worn at her last ball before she died. Mrs Danvers's act explains further her efforts to revive Rebecca's image in Manderley through the narrator. The narrator thinks as she clothes herself in this new costume:

I did not recognize the face that stared at me in the glass. The eyes were larger surely, the mouth narrower, the skin white and clear? The curls stood away from the head in a little cloud. I watched this self that was not me at all and then smiled; a new, slow smile [...] I don't think I have ever felt so excited before, so happy and proud (*Rebecca* 237-38)

Until now, the narrator has shown excitement and happiness every time she has pronounced Rebecca's name loudly or has tried to embrace her identity. This is a sign of her coming to terms with the phantom that she has encrypted within her psyche. In other words, she is actually identifying with the self that she wants to embrace.

Until she achieves a full knowledge of this object haunting her subject, the patient, Abraham and Maria affirm, has to suffer from a wound (5). Indeed, the narrator at some point of the novel tries to end her life with the aim of getting rid of Rebecca's ghost. The suicide attempt scene is initiated by Mrs Danvers, who shows a hostility towards the narrator. Mrs Danvers's hostility grows out of her refusal to acknowledge the death of Rebecca. One interpretation of her hostility is that what she dislikes is the narrator's orthodox qualities of feminine passivity that she portrays. Indeed, in trying to revive Rebecca, Mrs Danvers seeks to revive her qualities of power, freedom and authority. She says to the narrator, "‘everyone was angry with her when she cut her hair,’ she said, ‘but she did not care. ‘It’s nothing to do with anyone but myself,’ she would say. And of course short hair was much easier for riding and sailing.” (*Rebecca* 190). The act of cutting her hair shorter is a sign of her independent character and hints at her rebellious nature against the traditional codes of femininity. Ray Strachey, for example, describes the way women were adopting a different clothing style after the Great War that was considered as a rebellious act:

Skirts grew shorter and shorter, clothes grew more and more simple and convenient, and hair, that "crowning glory of a woman", was cut short. With one bound the young women of 1919 burst out from the hampering conventions, and with their cigarettes, their motor-cars, their latch-keys, and their athletics they astonished and scandalised their elders. (389)

The changing aspect of fashion in the post-war period constituted a threat to society as whole because it challenged the established boundaries of femininity. These practical clothing also signify women's resistance to be put back to the traditional way of life. The anger that Rebecca has triggered when adopting this new style indicates the potential fear of the patriarchal society of this seemingly deviant woman that could threaten the future of the nation because of the potential threat it constitutes to the boundaries of marriage and family life. Mrs Danvers begins to express her grief as she talks about Rebecca with the narrator. In doing so she actually mourns the death of Rebecca with the narrator that she says: "What's it to do with you if I show my grief? I'm not ashamed of it" (*Rebecca* 274). In expressing her grief, Mrs Danvers encourages the narrator to throw herself out of the window saying:

"don't be afraid," said Mrs Danvers. "I won't push you. I won't stand by you. You can jump of your own accord. What's the use of your staying here at Manderley?"

[...] "Why don't you jump?" whispered Mrs Danvers. "Why don't you try?"

[...] "Go on," whispered Mrs Danvers. "Go on, don't be afraid."

I shut my eyes. I was giddy from staring down at the terrace, and my fingers ached from holding to the edge [...] I was beginning to forget about being unhappy, and about loving Maxim. I was beginning to forget Rebecca. Soon I would not have to think about Rebecca anymore... (*Rebecca* 276-277)

In expressing her grief, Mrs Danvers moves from the silence of incorporation that the internalisation of Rebecca's idolatry caused to introjection, which means the conscious expression of the loss that has fractured her psychology⁵⁰. The introjection process paves the way towards healing. Since Mrs Danvers is the original source of the narrator's haunted self, it can be deduced that her healing will lead to the narrator's recovery from her inner battle. Through her mourning, Mrs Danvers pushes the narrator to commit suicide which gets interrupted by a sudden explosion that "shook the window" (*Rebecca* 277) where the narrator stood. Mrs Danvers explains that the explosion came from a "ship gone ashore there in the bay" (*Rebecca* 277). It appears later that the ship is, in fact, Rebecca's boat in which she has drowned. The return of Rebecca's boat symbolises the emergence of the phantom that both Mrs Danvers and the narrator have sheltered in a tomb in their subjects. The emanation of Rebecca's dead body ashore leads the phantom that haunts the narrator to dissolve with the narrator's assimilation of its power. The narrator reflects:

Rebecca's power had dissolved into the air, like the mist had done. She would never haunt me again. She would never stand behind me on the stairs, sit beside me in the dining-room, lean down from the gallery and watch me standing in the hall. [...] Her body had come back, her boat had been found with its queer prophetic name, *Je Reviens*, but I was free of her forever. (*Rebecca* 320)

⁵⁰ Incorporation is "introducing all or part of a love object or a thing into one's own body, possessing, expelling or alternatively acquiring, keeping, loosing it—here are varieties of fantasy indicating, in the typical forms of possession or feigned dispossession, a basic intrapsychic situation: the situation created by the reality of a loss sustained by the psyche" (126). Introjection of "a desire, a pain, a situation means channelling them through language into a community of empty mouths" (Abraham and Torok 128). This means that introjection is a process that where the individual expresses loss through language in order to discard it.

This statement comes after Rebecca's murder secret is revealed by Mr de Winter, clarifying that he had never loved Rebecca. It is at this level that the narrator is freed from her haunting thoughts. Whereas the novel might appear as a romance, the narrator's inner battle to achieve an identity is more than a mere jealousy story. In fact, du Maurier masks important messages behind her seemingly romantic stories (Auerbach 113). After naming the phantom and understanding it, the narrator is freed from her crypt. This is realised after Mrs Danvers's mourning. Frosh argues in this view that the phantom is created through a "protective factor" (39). It is Mrs Danvers who acts as a protective factor to this phantom and transfers it to the narrator. This means that until she resolves her mourning, the narrator remains haunted. After Mrs Danvers expresses her grief for the loss of Rebecca, the narrator is freed from the crypt that has been created through transference from Mrs Danvers. Such haunting is described by Frosh as:

necessary for ordinary psychic life. The present cannot exist on its own, as a separate point in time unformed by past and future: it is always transient, in process, so always saturated with the sounds and sights of memory and expectation. This means that without a certain degree and kind of haunting, there is no possibility of a present (40-41)

Indeed, the haunting of Rebecca's ghost, accordingly, is a necessary tool for the narrator to learn about her desires and to find a name, meaning identity. The tangibility of Rebecca's body that is discovered by the end of the novel deconstructs the crypt and also dispels the haunting force that it produces. This means that the material presence of Rebecca's corpse that is discovered later in the novel entails a symbolic exorcism of the phantom from the narrator's psyche, allowing her to absorb its power. Her unknown identity is thereby resolved. This is evidenced in the flashback at the beginning of the novel, where the narrator reflects upon her changed identity:

At any rate I have lost my diffidence, my timidity, my shyness with strangers. I am very different from that self who drove to Manderley for the first time, hopeful and eager, handicapped by a rather desperate gaucherie and filled with an intense desire to please. It was my lack of poise of course that made such a bad impression on people like Mrs Danvers. What must I have seemed like after Rebecca? (*Rebecca* 9-10)

We also learn from the flashback that the narrator no longer lives in Manderley, bearing in mind that the latter has been burned down by the end of the novel. This is a replicate scene from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) in which Thornfield house is burned down by the madwoman in the attic. In this novel, it is not known how it has been burned down. The act of the burned house per se is sufficient to suggest that it is symbolic of the fact that domestic life for 1930s women is not static. This is further confirmed in the way that the narrator ends up living in liminality from hotel to another with her husband. Auerbach comments on this point, saying that "home in *Rebecca* is an *unheimlich* monstrosity whose only alternative is exile" (103). Indeed, the ending of the narrator is similar, in a way, to that of Mary Yellan as they equally end up in "exile". By "exile", I refer, in this context, to the unknown spaces of liminality that have no permanent boundaries.

What du Maurier seems to draw upon in these two novels is the despair regarding women's place in modern times. She brings to light the fact that the eighteenth-century as well as nineteenth-century women's ambitions about stability of power and independence turn to disillusionment by the 1930s. It is perhaps the reason why she adapted the scene of the burned house from *Jane Eyre*. For example, the tone of female independence sensed in *Jane Eyre* is negated in *Rebecca*. Auerbach, in relation to this, contends that

The Brontës if there ever was such an entity, do inhabit Daphne du Maurier's romances, but in twisted, diminished shape. Their tales of progress and reform, in which purposeful women take control of a future that dissolute men can't control, have no place in du Maurier's choked-off England. (119)

In line with Auerbach's argument, the nameless narrator and Mary Yellan's shared position in the Gothic enclosed spaces of Jamaica Inn and Manderley estate can be said to mirror the situation of some middle-class women in the disillusioned post-war England. With little choice offered to them outside, many women accepted the return to the home space after the war. The narrator's story gives an image of a forced return to the house because she has no place in the world of the 1930s⁵¹. She says to Mr de Winter "you have a home, I have none" (*Rebecca* 50). Her statement here hints at the uncertainty of women's place at that time. That they got access to the outer space with the outbreak of the First World War does not guarantee a long-lasting stability. With no choice left, they are required to be back to the home. However, the home this time rejects them and only allows them in as visitors or guests, the narrator thinks: "I was a guest again, an invited guest" (*Rebecca* 187). This, again is confirmed in the way that both heroines cross the home space as visitors which is indicative of their continuous challenges to place themselves in the map of the public world outside.

To conclude, the nameless narrator and Mary's journey in Manderley and Jamaica Inn speak for the struggles of modern women readers of that era who are unable to identify

⁵¹ Light comments on the way the nameless narrator enters the realm of domestic life says: "The psychology she enters into with the most sympathy is that of the stranger beyond the gates, the outsider who longs for a home but cannot find one, or has lost it, the person shut out from 'full life'". (185)

with newness. Newness here emanates from their in and out movements from private to public and vice-versa and thereby refers to the state of confusion overwhelming them. Modern women's return to the house, as shown in these novels, is accompanied by ghost visitors from the past. For the nameless narrator it is Rebecca as she notices that "I could not help it if she came to me in thoughts, in dreams" (*Rebecca* 154), and for Mary it is her aunt presenting the old systems of patriarchy. Despite the writer's attempt to distance herself from gender concerns of her time where she published the novels, her female characters' experience of their return to the house is, in many ways, relatable to the inter-war woman's experience. Women's place in this period was defined by estrangement and the uncanny simply because of their exposure to newness from different aspects and most importantly their temporary taste of new freedoms. Beddoe asks "what happened to the great mass of suffrage movement of the years before the First World War? What happened to women workers who had proved so handsomely in the First World War that they could do 'men's jobs'?" (1). In fact, Beddoe's question finds its answers in du Maurier's female character's transitory journeys as they are estranged from their societies and, thereby, thrown into the transitional thresholds of modernity. Such transitional thresholds in these two novels seem to offer a safe haven under the uncertainty overwhelming the inter-war period. Du Maurier's escape from the frustrating life of the metropolis and the way in which she places her women characters in the rural spaces of England, instead, does not guarantee fixity because they come to discover a new form of independence in the "exile".⁵² Whereas du Maurier captured twentieth-century women's experience from within, Jean Rhys takes

⁵² Hellen Taylor in her introduction in Daphne du Maurier's *Myself When Young* (1977) asserts that "unlike the rest of her family, she did not jump on the train to Paddington to escape Cornwall's cold and rainy winter; she had put down roots far from theatrical and literary London and that suited her well" (xiii)

her readers into a journey to the outside world of the metropolis picturing women's experience as they stroll in the cities of London and Paris. In addition, given that du Maurier's women end up in liminality, Rhys shows further the experience of women in the liminal spaces of urban Modernism. The next chapter will focus on this point, by drawing attention to the horrors and uncertainties that women have faced in the metropolis that du Maurier attempted to avoid in her works and will also show women's struggle to maintain a position in the public spaces through invisibility.

Chapter Six: “There always remains something”: A Representation of Women as Living Ghosts in Jean Rhys’s Fiction

Writing in the same period as du Maurier, Jean Rhys offers further insights to women’s experience in a space of liminality to which du Maurier hinted towards the endings of *Rebecca* and *Jamaica Inn*. Rhys’s female characters occupy transitory spaces such as hotels, lodging houses, and cafés. Their access to the metropolis connotes Modernist spectralities. Parsons points out that “Walking in the city is at once an encounter with modernity and with the past, with the new and unknown but also with haunting ghosts” (10). Rhys’s female characters are haunted and also haunt the spaces they traverse. Their marginalised status leads them to be perceived as ghostly figures to some degree. This ghostliness takes place as they seek anonymity as well as invisibility from the gaze of the crowd dominated by the male. The menace that emerges from the seemingly panoptic spaces of the cafés, hotels and streets is symptomatic of the threat these women pose by their new access to these spaces. Women in these novels scrutinise painful realities of the bleak world outside the home. Rhys frees her women from the restrictive conventions of the previous century that are motherhood and marriage only to show vivid sketches of a crueller world in the transitory spaces that are said to promise freedom for the female *flâneur*. As we examine Rhys’s works, *Quartet* (1928), *After Leaving Mr Mackenzie* (1930) and *Good morning Midnight* (1939), this chapter shows how the female characters in these novels struggle to exhibit a form of resilience inherent in the invisible. This idea that invisibility can yield a sense of agency is taken from Peeren’s study where she uses it in a chapter of her book to refer to undocumented migrant workers in Stephen Frears’s *Dirty Pretty Things* who lack a social visibility, yet extract a sort of agency from their position of living ghosts. Peeren asks “Is the solution to somehow assert one’s concrete presence and materiality or can one’s remaining unseen also be tactically employed to turn a

disappearing, dispossessed ghost into an active haunting force, a site of spectral agency?” (33). My analysis in this chapter departs from Peeren’s idea of a plausible power in invisibility. Rhys’s women characters in these novels exhibit a desire towards concealment from the urban setting as it offers them a temporary protection and safety from the judgemental looks of the crowd.

Throughout the novels, Sasha Jansen in *Midnight*, Julia Martin in *Mackenzie* and Marya Zelli in *Quartet* show that they do not conform to the inter-war society’s demands most of which centre on restoring the comfort of the pre-war home and family structure. These characters are thereby relegated to marginalised spaces of the hotels and cafés or restaurants which are supposed to offer them an escape from the judgemental gaze of the public space. These semi spaces nevertheless prove to be unwelcoming because of the panoptic mechanism they generate against these female characters. These characters consequently begin to show a desire for invisibility that seems to offer some agency. This is how they descend to the world of hauntology which makes them more threatening liminal figures⁵³. The liminal figures of monsters and vampires in the earlier Gothic are replaced by liminal women figures haunting the streets of the modern city. Rhys, in fact, shows us another aspect of women’s struggle for place and identity in the inter-war period from the

⁵³ The term “Hauntology” was coined by Derrida in his *Spectres of Marx* (1993). He says: “What is a ghost? What is the effectivity or the presence of a specter, that is, of what seems to remain as ineffective, virtual, insubstantial as a simulacrum? Is there there, between the thing itself and its simulacrum, an opposition that holds up? Repetition and first time, but also repetition and last time, since the Singularity of any first time, makes of it also a last time. Each time it is the event itself, a first time is a last time. Altogether other. Staging for the end of history. Let us call it a hauntology”. (10). By this Derrida refers to the phenomenon that replaces the state of tangibility with the ghostly figure that is located in-between life and death, past and present.

perspective of the solitary woman who is economically insecure as she roams between and within the urban spaces of London and Paris. Most of their strolls are marked in the city of Paris. Because the practice of *flânerie* was more possible in France than London, Rhys places her English women characters in the city of Paris to sketch their experience of *flânerie*. Walter Benjamin discards London as a space of *flânerie* in his study because he believes that it is too crowded, hence, dismantles attempts of voyeurism of its urban setting. Instead, Dana Arnold, states:

the glazed-over arcades of Paris allow the mobility of the flaneur/euse and his/her ability to look through the crowd and to render it transparent, or at least to make it appear as if it were not there. In this way the flaneur's anonymity was retained as there was no physical or eye contact made with those around him. (334)

This experience of anonymity that Arnold hints at is not possible for Rhys's female characters, for they are continuously watched. This is because the in-between spaces of the city are contaminated by social control, crippling any sense of freedom these characters possess. By this I mean, first, the menace brought by the liminality of the urban spaces and, second, the way female characters turn to invisibility for protection. This chapter, then, is structured across two sections. The first section examines the perils emanating from the semi-spaces that are supposed to offer freedom to the female *flâneur*. The second section explores the ways in which the heroines resort to forms of invisibility that rather render them as living ghosts. Throughout the novels that will be examined in this chapter, the female characters move from the world of materiality to the world of hauntology to borrow Derrida's terms. This is achieved in the way they appear to act as living ghosts who try to exert empowerment from their status of invisibility. Rhys in this chapter brings to light a form of a Modernist spectrality that lurks in the urban spaces as well as in her female characters.

Metropolitan spaces are male institutions or have been previously preserved for men. The man who has the ability to walk in the city and to act as its observer is called a *flâneur*. The *flâneur* is French term that means stroller and observer of the richness of the metropolis. This urban figure was a popular figure in Paris by mid nineteenth century. His earliest reference dates back to an anonymous pamphlet published in 1806 which contains initial characteristics of this figure as embodied by a certain “Monsieur Bonhomme”, a stroller of the Bonaparte era. The characteristics depicted in this pamphlet are found later in the works of Baudelaire and Benjamin about their accounts of the *flâneur* (Wilson 75).

It has become a subject of major interest when Walter Benjamin uses the term to describe the urban male of nineteenth-century Paris. Janet Wolff comments that “the streets and the arcades of the city are the home of the *flâneur*” (7). Benjamin’s study has stirred hot debates among twentieth-century scholars and particularly feminists who sought to position women within the city and thus adapted the term to “*flâneuse*”. This is significant to this chapter because it explains the source of fear that the female characters encounter when walking in the city streets. Parsons argues that the act of urban *flânerie* is not restricted to men and that women have a different experience of this to the male (5). Rhys’s female characters seem to have a negative experience of *flânerie*. They are rootless, strolling through the cities of Paris and London in search of a place of fixity which does not seem to be available. The urban spaces that Sasha Jansen in *Midnight* traverses are saturated with the male gaze. By the male gaze, I mean the reclaiming looks that the male *flâneur* displays towards the threatening figure of the female *flâneur*. Lauren Elkin states that “a figure of masculine privilege and leisure, with time and money and no immediate responsibilities to claim his attention, the *flâneur* understands the city as few of its inhabitants do, for he has memorised it with his feet” (3). In addition to this, he has the advantage to walk in the crowd unnoticed. The female stroller, on the other hand, needs to

be armed against the gaze to be unnoticed or to achieve what Elkin calls a “self-effacement” (62). “Self-effacement”, however, is not permissible for the female walker as it is for the male, for she is constantly watched by the crowd. Rhys’s novel *Midnight*, reveals the menace of the urban spaces that emerges as a result of women’s new movements in the city. In charting Sasha’s movements, the novel presents a woman’s attempt to evade this menace through invisibility. Invisibility which might be regarded as passive turns out to be a source of power for Sasha.

Midnight chronicles a twenty-eight-year-old woman’s journey in Paris. Sasha Jansen is originally from London living with her husband in poverty; they decide to move to Paris hoping to have a better life. Things, however, do not improve and her husband abandons her when she is pregnant; she miscarries. She returns to London sinking into a life of depression until a friend offers her money to travel back to Paris hoping this will purge the pain of losing her last child and absent husband. Parsons states that “it must be admitted that Paris offered, if not greater freedom then greater tolerance than London for female *flânerie*” (20). London, indeed, is described by Sasha as a claustrophobic space. She reflects that it is like:

A little room, smelling stuffy, with my stocking hanging to dry in front of a gas-fire. Nothing in that room was ever clean; nothing was ever dirty, either. Things were always half-and-half [...] The war is over. No more war never, never, never. Après la guerre, there’ll be a good time everywhere And not to go back to London. It isn’t so fine, what I have to go back to in London. (*Midnight* 93-94).

It is possible to link Sasha’s symbolism of London as a claustrophobic room to post-war England which was still healing the scars left by the First World War and the ever-increasing fear of another war. This shook the belief in the supposed stability and security of one’s home. Barry Eichengreen describes inter-war Britain as “essentially a time of

persistent depression, gloom and failure.” (335). Sasha’s statement of “nothing in that room was ever clean; nothing was ever dirty either” can be said to symbolise a world of uncertainty and insecurity that women have felt in Britain in the aftermath of the Great War. In addition, there was a clear shortage of jobs for women in Britain, which might have led Sasha to move to Paris. The inter-war years in Great Britain witnessed long term unemployment due to economic depression, especially between the years 1929 and 1932 (Beddoe 54). In addition to this, women’s participation in workforce during these years was hindered because of the ongoing effect of the idea that women had taken men’s jobs which was particularly emphasized during the Great Slump of the early 1930s. The inter-war period city becomes the locus for dread and terror for Sasha that she sees no hope in staying in London. Sasha’s description of London recalls the Gothic confining room such as those occurring in Walpole and Radcliffe’s Romances where the heroines are imprisoned by the lord of the Gothic castle⁵⁴. So, the image of London as a confining Gothic room, perhaps, reflects the suffocating domestic roles of the past that the society seeks to revive and which in turn cripple women’s sense of freedom between the 1920s and 1930s. Botting in this view states: “The modern city combined the natural and architectural components of Gothic grandeur and wilderness, its dark, labyrinthine forests suggesting the violence and menace of Gothic castle and forest” (2). This suggests the wilderness of the public spaces that Sasha would experience during her sojourn in Paris.

⁵⁴ “The matriarch of the GOTHIC NOVEL, Ann RADCLIFFE, introduced the fair damsel trapped in compromising situations with an evil count’s enclosure of Emily ST. AUBERT in the castle of the title in *THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO* (1794), a dismal setting in the Apennines. Matthew Gregory LEWIS augmented the menace of a male confining a female with atrocities committed in a crypt by the ominous AMBROSIO in *THE MONK* (1796). In retort to Lewis’s SENSATIONALISM, Radcliffe augmented the enclosure motif in *THE ITALIAN* (1797), which imprisons both male and female, the ingenue and her lover” (Gothic Encyclopaedia 96)

Paris which seems to offer a “saving illusion” (Parsons 148) for Sasha, reveals other anxieties. Rhys herself met certain freedom in the Parisian café at the Rotonde; she says in her unfinished autobiography *Smile Please* (1979):

I preferred the Rotonde to the Dome, it was quieter. I thought it lovely to be able to sit in peace with a cup of coffee and look at all the papers without being harried or stared at in any way. So unlike London, I thought. In fact it was just this feeling of freedom and the blue sky and the light which made me happy and carefree for the first time for so long. (142)

Rhys’s heroines, like Rhys herself, tend to experience a form of freedom in Paris only to discover danger within the walls of its semi-spaces, hotels, boarding houses, restaurants and cafés. These spaces then can be referred to as spectral because they turn to conjure a sense of surveillance on the female stroller, thus evoking a sense of haunting fear. Cafés, for instance, have been known as spaces of artistic expression and exchange throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in France. By 1914 the café has been a more flourishing institution than it has been before (Haine 6). Whether this institution shall be regarded as positive or negative, Haine argues, remains complex to account for because it offers a means of expression and social interaction, yet threatens the deterioration of home and family life (20). This complexity is symptomatic of its in-betweenness. In gender terms, the café can be said to be situated between male and female. It can be considered as a third space in which individuals are supposed to be equal. Noting that restaurants and bars also act in the same way as the cafés, Rhys depicts them as panoptic spaces. Panopticism is a concept coined by Jeremy Bentham’s in 1791 and which was later theorised by Michel Foucault in his *Discipline and Punishment* (1975). The Panopticon is an institutional building, or a system designed by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham. It is described by Foucault as follows:

A annular building; at the centre, a tower; this tower is pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring; the peripheric building is divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building; they have two windows, one on the inside, corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside, allows the light to cross the cell from one end to the other. All that is needed, then, is to place a supervisor in a central tower and to shut up in each cell a madman, a patient, a condemned man, a worker or a schoolboy (200)

The city's semi spaces in this novel which include streets, cafés, restaurants and hotels function as panoptic spaces that watch and control the movements of the female *flâneur* inside them. An instance of this can be seen when Sasha decides to have a meal at an Italian restaurant. She admits that it is one of the most expensive restaurants around the place where she is staying. Sasha reflects:

These people all fling themselves at me. Because I am uneasy and sad they all fling themselves at me larger than life. But I can put my arm up to avoid the impact and they slide gently to the ground.

[...] I order sole and white wine. I eat with my eyes glued on my plate, the feeling of panic growing worse. (I told you not come in here, I told you not to.)

At last, coffee. I wish I wasn't sitting so far from the door. However, it's nearly over. Soon I shall be out in the street again. I feel better. (*Midnight* 38)

Sasha here is conscious that she is being visible to the crowd. What this passage reveals is that it was still undesirable for women to sit in public spaces on their own. Giles says that "financial independence, increased job opportunities, educational opportunities and the mobilities occasioned by the First World War had made women visible as never before in the public spaces of all large cities" (102). Although the Great War has offered freedom of

mobility in public spaces, this freedom in *Midnight* is rather limited because Sasha is constantly watched by those in power. Sasha's hypervisibility within the restaurant evokes anxiety and horror within her that she is incapable of returning the looks with her eyes "glued on [her] plate" which indicates her vulnerable position. This is made worse when two girls walk in and one of them loudly says "'Et qu'est-ce qu'elle fout ici, maintenant?'" (*Midnight* 39). Theodore, the restaurant owner, replies, "'Everybody', [...] 'comes back to Paris. Always'" (*Midnight* 39). Being subject to the gaze of the crowd can also be attributed to her social class. Given that the restaurant is an expensive one makes it an unwelcoming space or even hostile for lower-class women like Sasha. The panoptic mechanism here takes place in the way that the owner of the restaurant together with the Bourgeois women represent the way the society ensures the functioning of its power through surveillance. After this incident, Sasha thinks that she should be "walk[ing] under a bus" (*Midnight* 40) after she has left, indicating a desire for invisibility. Her wish of concealment shows the struggle of the female *flâneur* who instead of finding her place in the metropolis, longs for disappearance from the visual world around her. She is thereby excluded from this metropolitan space by those in power, meaning the supervisors of the panoptic urban spaces; she thinks:

I finish the coffee, pay the bill and walk out. I would give all that's left of my life to be able to put out my tongue and say: 'One word to you,' as I pass that girl's table. I would give all the rest of my life to be able even to stare coldly at her. As it is, I can't speak to her, I can't even look at her. I just walk out. (*Midnight* 40)

This passage shows the sense of terror that could emanate from the semi-space of the restaurant. The power inherent in it is dangerous for Sasha, who is incapable of facing its panoptic control. Despite her wanting to challenge its dangerous power by looking back at the crowd, she opts for "walk[ing] out" indicating a wish for invisibility.

This scene reoccurs in *Mackenzie*. The storyline of this earlier novel is not very different from *Midnight*'s. It follows the journey of Julia Martin, recently abandoned by her ex-lover Mr Mackenzie on whom she used to rely for financial security. She has, like Sasha Jansen, left London and her family, hoping to meet a better freedom in Paris. One of the restaurants where she stops to meet Mr Mackenzie – after a while of separation – can also be regarded as panoptic. Mainly its patron, Mr Albert, who puts the female subject under constant visibility that “assures the automatic functioning of power” (Foucault 201). This occurs when Mr Albert asks Mr Mackenzie if he wants to put Julia out of the restaurant, for he has noticed the frightened state of Mr Mackenzie when Julia walks in “ghost-like” (*Mackenzie* 22):

He looked to the right and the left of him with a helpless expression. He felt a sensation of great relief when he saw that Monsieur Albert was standing near his table looking at him with significance.

“That’s the first time I’ve ever seen that chap look straight at anybody,” Mr Mackenzie thought.

Monsieur Albert was a small, fair man, an Alsatian. His eyes telegraphed, “I understand; I remember this woman. Do you want to have her put out?”

Mr Mackenzie’s face instinctively assumed a haughty expression, as if to say, “What the devil do you mean?” He raised his eyebrows a little, just to put the fellow in his place.

Monsieur Albert moved away. When he had gone a little distance, he turned. This time Mr Mackenzie tried to telegraph back, “Not yet, anyhow. But stand by.” (*Mackenzie* 22)

According to Foucault, the tower of the building from which the inmate is spied remains “inverifiable”, meaning that the inmate “must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment, but must be sure that he may always be so” (201). The looks that Monsieur Albert gives to Mr Mackenzie suggest that he knows Julia and that he has been inspecting her without her noticing it. The anonymity that Sasha and Julia experience in the restaurant is disturbed by the surveillance of Mr Albert, for instance. Elkin points out that the argument surrounding the *flâneuse* is often linked to questions of visibility; she says of women that “we would love to be invisible the way a man is. We’re not the ones who make ourselves visible [...] it’s the gaze of the *flâneur* that makes the woman who would join his ranks too visible to slip by unnoticed (13). In this light, Sasha and Julia are hyper visible in this space; this hypervisibility generates a constant danger of being captured by the *flâneur*’s gaze.

Surveillance is one of the dominant elements of Gothic Romances by which the sinister villains control the vulnerable heroines. In *The Monk*, for example, James Carson, states that “authority is exerted through torture and censorship, but also through surveillance and ventriloquism.” (87). An element of this surveillance in *The Monk* is the magic surveillance mirror that shows Ambrosio a picture of Antonia, a woman he has fallen in love with, when she is preparing to take a bath: “The amorous Monk had full opportunity to observe the voluptuous contours and admirable symmetry of her person” (*Monk* 271). He then pursues Antonia and tries to rape her in her room. Surveillance in Radcliffe’s *Udolpho* also “underscores the function of looking as a form of surveillance” (Benedict 177). This element of surveillance continues to enact authority, in inter-war fiction, against the female *flâneur* in metropolitan spaces.

This fear of capture also occurs in Rhys’s first novel *Quartet*. Similarly, the novel examines the life of the lonely and poor woman called Marya Zelli, alone because her

husband has been imprisoned. Left alone without any money or a place to stay, she is taken in by a couple who would look after her. She consequently drifts into an affair with the husband, Mr Heidler, who offers her financial security and protection in return for sexual favour. Here again, the reader is presented with the struggles of the solitary woman in the streets of Paris. After the arrest of her husband, Marya walks in the streets, sensing the fear of being followed by something she cannot identify:

She spent the foggy day in endless, aimless walking, for it seemed to her that if she moved quickly enough she would escape the fear that hunted her. It was a vague and shadowy fear of something cruel and stupid that had caught her and would never let her go [...] You could argue about hunger or cold or loneliness, but with that fear you couldn't argue. It went too deep. You were too mysteriously sure of its terror. You could only walk very fast and try to leave it behind you. (*Quartet* 28)

The purpose of this female walking in Rhys's novels, Parsons argues, becomes "largely a retreat, anonymity from others and themselves" (125). Anonymity is not possible for Marya as she seems to be haunted by the possibility of a return to her life of loneliness and poverty with "no money, nothing at all" (*Quartet* 17) before meeting her husband Stephan to whom she had become financially subordinated. In spite of the increased access of women to public spaces after the war, Marya mirrors a life of uncertainty emanating from the idea that although she has the freedom of walking in the metropolis, she is in fact insecure, wishing to "walk fast" to overcome the fear hunting her. Marya withdraws from the streets to her room for a refuge, she

went back to her bedroom from the misty streets and shut the door with a feeling of relief as if she had shut out a malignant world. Her bedroom was a refuge. She undressed slowly, thinking: “funny this room is without Stephan.” Empty it looked and full of shadows. Every now and again she would stop undressing and listen, half expecting to hear him coming along the passage. (*Quartet* 28)

This passage reveals a realistic image of the insecurity that women feel when left alone. In other words, this passage shows the fact that traces of the ideology of separate spheres of the previous century are still detected. That the woman’s life is limited to the home sphere and expecting financial support from her husband is still applicable to the twentieth-century society as Rhys’s novels show. Marya’s reflection in the passage above shows the sense of fear overwhelming her because her husband on whom she has been financially dependent is now absent. Her fear increases when she switches the lights of her room off. The streets, however, continue to intrude into her private space. As she put the light out: “the fear was with her again – and now it was like a long street where she walked endlessly. A redly lit street, the houses on either side tall, grey and closely shuttered, the only sound the clip-clop of horses’ hoofs behind her, out of sight.” (*Quartet* 29). The streets’ imagery here haunts her space of comfort of the room. It symbolises the vaults of the Gothic castle of Udolpho where the female Gothic Emily attempts to escape the imprisonment by its sinister lord Montoni. Having been held as prisoner along with her aunt, Emily manages to escape through the castle’s secret passages:

Towards her chamber she now hastened as far as her steps would bear her; for she still perceived, upon her passage, the sounds of confusion at a distance, and she endeavoured, by taking her way through some obscure rooms, to avoid encountering the persons whose looks had terrified her before, as well as those parts of the castle where the tumult might still rage.

At length she reached her chamber, and, having secured the door of the corridor, felt herself, for a moment in safety [...] Emily tried to tranquilize her spirits, but anxiety made her constantly listen for some sound, and often look out upon the ramparts, where all, however, was lonely and still. (*Udolpho* 294)

Even in her room, Emily imagines that she hears strange sounds that disrupt the sense of comfort and safety that she feels in this room. The haunting streets of *Quartet* demonstrate a similar agitation within the female character as in *Udolpho*. The Gothic in *Quartet* nevertheless escapes this physicality as it performs itself in a psychological manner in the way that the streets that Marya walks are imaginary streets. The intrusive streets are a product of her mind, resulting from the fear that has possessed her earlier walks in the public sphere. The idea that these streets do not seem to lead anywhere symbolises the bleak future of many women like herself who are found in the public space without any money.

Marya becomes dependent on the Heidlrs family financially but at the cost of becoming a mistress to Mr Heidler. Sexuality in this view becomes a woman's financial source. Not surprisingly, the kind of life that was available to some women in the inter-war years was that of a prostitute. Wolff remarks that "Modernity breeds, or makes visible, a number of categories of female city-dwellers. Among those most prominent [...] are: the prostitute, the widow, the old lady, the lesbian, the murder victim, and the passing unknown woman" (9). Stephan's imprisonment allows the reader to see Marya's life outside the constraints of marriage as she leads a life of loneliness and poverty in the city of Paris. She is regarded as a prostitute because as, Richard E. Zeikowitz affirms, "she is not walking determinably towards an endpoint" (4). The boundaries of the urban map of the Parisian city in Marya's aimless walks are rather vague. On her way to the prison to visit Stephan, Marya "crossed a cobblestoned courtyard and a dark, dank corridor like the open mouth of a monster swallowed her up." (*Quartet* 44). The personification of the corridor as the mouth

of a monster ready to swallow Marya evokes a Gothic sensibility that reveals the ways in which the panoptic city watches her and renders her walks painful. Women prostitutes were threatening liminal figures to the patriarchal authorities. With its characteristics of transgression and sexual excess, prostitution triggered considerable anxieties in the mid-nineteenth century. It was considered as a plague and an icon of destabilisation of the natural order of the patriarchal society (Wilson 73). It apparently continued to be a threat in the 1930s. The monstrous imagery of the corridor that threatens to swallow Marya can be interpreted as a form of surveillance that is evoked by her independent walks within the city.

Marya's journey, in this novel, projects women's life outside the structures of the house which they belong to and how they move from the safe boundaries of the home to a more dangerous world outside. This danger, Rhys seems to insist in her thematic replications of lonely and poor female characters is that it is a necessary danger that they need to experience in order to assimilate with the public life.

As seen in the examples of Sasha and Julia, the semi-space of the restaurant suggests that this place is dominated by the male gaze with the owner acting as the inspector of his panoptic restaurant. For Marya, the streets are haunted by fear. Since such spaces have been previously preserved for men, women's access to these tends to disrupt order. They, therefore, seek invisibility whenever they sense that they are being watched. They choose to walk in night time and even avoid certain streets or cafés. Sasha, for instance, says "avoidance of certain cafés, of certain streets, of certain spots, and everything will go off beautifully" (*Midnight* 8). This reoccurs in *Mackenzie*: "When she had finished her meal Julia went for a walk. She did this every day whatever the weather. She was so anxious not to meet anybody she knew that she always kept to the back streets as much as possible" (*Mackenzie* 13). As seen here, the heroines lack a sense of spatial belonging. Indeed, caught

in the male domain of these spaces, the heroines tend to avoid these spaces for the sense of imprisonment that they conjure. Their act of evading these imprisoning spaces indicates further an emerging desire for invisibility as a protective factor. This invisibility can be expressed as a form of dematerialisation from the world of ontology. This means that Rhys's female protagonists take the status of living ghosts in the way that they are alienated, thus they come to live in a realm of hauntology which seems to provide a safer place. The ghosts dealt with here are what Peeren calls "metaphorical ghosts" (4). The strict definition of the ghost figure would characterise it as the return of the dead's spirit (Briggs 177). Nevertheless, the figure can also be used in its figurative form to describe the marginalised and the dispossessed individuals in a certain society.

Janet Wolff describes the female *flâneur* as invisible because she is excluded from city life (3). Instead, invisibility should not necessarily be perceived as a negative thing because invisibility in the city becomes a quest for Rhys's female characters rather than just merely a form of concealment. This is because of the potential sense of empowerment it appears to offer them. An example of this quest appears as Sasha recalls the job she has had as a seller at a department store during her first stay in Paris, three years earlier. Remembering an incident when the boss has come to the shop for a visit, Sasha reflects how she has wished to disappear so he would not notice her, thinking: "Don't let him notice me, don't let him look at me. Isn't there something you can do so that nobody looks at you or sees you? Of course, you must make your mind vacant, neutral, then your face also becomes vacant, neutral – you are invisible" (*Midnight* 11). Rather than searching to place themselves in *flânerie*, Rhys's women long for invisibility which suggests a form of agency for them.

As a way to reach invisibility, Sasha often retreats to the lavatories of the panoptic restaurant or café where she is being watched. She says, "I go upstairs to the lavabo, one

of the attractions of the Pig and Lily. So clean and resplendent, so well lit, with plenty of looking glasses and not a soul there to watch you. Am I looking all right? Not so bad. Surely, not so bad....” (*Midnight* 128). This moment of escape from a sensed threat, again, recalls the eighteenth- century Gothic fiction where the female Gothic is found in flight from the brutal male patriarch to hide in her room for safety. In Rhys’s fiction the heroine is in flight from the sinister gaze of the crowd as she hides in the lavatories of the Parisian cafés that seem to offer only a temporary relief. Sasha, indeed, often retreats to the wash-rooms to cry as she finds these a safe refuge. One night while she is in her hotel room she recalls an incident where she has burst into tears in front of a woman sitting at the next table in a restaurant. She says it is something she has remembered when the woman has asked about the reason of her crying. She hurries to the lavatory to reflect:

Unable to stop crying, I went down into the lavabo. A familiar lavabo, and luckily empty. The old dame was outside near the telephone, talking to a girl.

I stayed there, staring at myself in the glass. What do I want to cry about?...On the contrary, it's when I am quite sane like this, when I have had a couple of extra drinks and am quite sane, that I realize how lucky I am. Saved, rescued, fished-up, half-drowned, out of the deep, dark river, dry clothes [...]. Nobody would know I had ever been in it. Except, of course, that there always remains something. Yes, there always remains something (*Midnight* 4)

In this empty lavatory, Sasha believes nobody will notice her. The only thing she confronts within this space is her own reflection in the glass. Distanced from the crowd within this little space, Sasha still feels that she is chased by something. Although she is granted temporary relief, “there always remains something” that will chase her wherever she is. Her thoughts shift to her present time where she is in her room. After the short flashback of the lavabo episode, she thinks “...Never mind here I am sane and dry, with my place to

hide in. What more do I want?... I'm a bit of an automaton, but sane, surely-dry and sane. Now I have forgotten about dark streets, dark rivers, the pain, the struggle and the drowning ...” (*Midnight* 4). As in Marya's case in *Quartet*, Sasha considers her room as a safe place from the danger of the streets where she is likely to be figuratively drowned in the middle of the crowd passing by.

The Metropolis with its panoptic components of cafés and restaurants in this case has always been part of male possession which means that the male gaze is already focalized in in these spaces. This also means that the increasing freedom of women's access to these spaces resists the controlling policy of the urban map of Paris. Even the small space of the wash room where Sasha often escapes to from the crowd generates ghostly reaction against her presence. Rene, a man she has met in one of the cafés, reflects about her constant retreats to the lavatories commenting that it is annoying: “‘you're always disappearing into the lavabo, you. C'est agaçant’” (*Midnight* 141). During one of her meetings with him in a café, Sasha withdraws to the lavabo after having had a conversation with him. While in the lavatory, Sasha thinks: “This is another lavatory that I know very well, another of the well-known mirrors” (*Midnight* 141). As she looks at the mirror, the mirror says:

“Well, well,” it says, “last time you looked in here you were a bit different, weren't you? Would you believe me that, of all the faces I see, I remember each one, that I keep a ghost to throw back at each one – lightly, like an echo – when it looks into me again?” All glasses in all lavabos do this. (*Midnight* 141)

The looking glasses, in Rhys's *Midnight*, as Graham Fraser points out “are more fundamentally acting as portals to a ghostly experience of place, time, memory, and self” (483). Being spoken to by an unanimated object exemplifies this “ghostly experience of place”. In addition, the ghostly statement of the mirror can be said to result from the continuous perils of these semi metropolitan spaces against Sasha. The speaking mirror

here interrupts Sasha's sense of anonymity. This symbolises a containment of Sasha's gaze, noting that she is only enabled to achieve this urban gaze when looking at the mirror. Although she is away from the crowd in the lavatory, the speaking mirror serves as a reminder of the fact that she is being seen, hence, surveilled. It can be deduced then that Sasha constitutes a form of a threat to the panoptic spaces because of the ephemeral anonymity that she reaches inside the lavatory. This allows her to take the position of what Derrida calls a "visor".

It is essential, in this sense, to make use of Derrida's theory of the "visor effect" in the sense that Sasha becomes a "visor" in places where she is not hyper visible such as the lavatories. Although not with the real sense of the theory, Sasha's relationship with the metropolis allows an association with Derrida's "visor". The visor he explains:

Here is – or rather there is, over there, an unnameable or almost unnameable thing: something, between something and someone, anyone or anything, some thing, "this thing," but this thing and not any other, this thing that looks at us, that concerns us [qui nous regarde], comes to defy semantics as much as ontology.... (5)

Sasha, or the Rhysian heroine, more broadly fits in Derrida's description of the ghostly in this passage. Sasha's position per se is unnameable as she stands between London and Paris, materiality and immateriality as well as between life and death. For Sasha, the narrative depicts: "You are walking along a road peacefully. You trip. You fall into blackness. That's the past – or perhaps the future. And you know that there is no past, no future, there is only this blackness" (*Midnight* 143). This example shows the way Sasha is placed in-between which is dictated by "blackness". Her time and space are unidentifiable, implying that her position in the metropolis is ambiguous and uncertain. In addition to her in-between position, Sasha is also "unnameable" in the way that she is rarely called by her name. After her second move to Paris, she has changed her name from Sophia to Sasha.

She thinks at the beginning of the novel: “I thought it might change my luck if I changed my name. Did it bring me any luck, I wonder – calling myself Sasha?” (*Midnight* 5). By changing her name, Sasha thinks that she will be able to re-assimilate with her new life in Paris. However, it turns out that nobody really calls her by her name. For example, she is called “the stranger, the alien, the old one” (*Midnight* 54) by the two girls she has encountered in the café and “Sale vache” (*Midnight* 149) by the commis voyageur, her hotel neighbour. Seen in this view, she is gradually pushed to the status of “other” or to a living ghost more specifically. In her unconscious attempt to make herself at home in the liminal space of the café, the latter functions as an enemy host, perceiving the female gaze defensively through the spectral discussion that the mirror glass initiates. In other words, Sasha disturbs this urban space that is dominated by the male subject. The ghostly reaction of the mirror is symbolic of the idea that Sasha’s *flânerie* remains restricted and unwelcomed. Sasha in this regard resonates with the outlook of Derrida’s “Visor” in that it defies the already established boundaries of the city.

A similar imagery is found in the novel when Sasha walks in night-time. It can be suggested that night walks permit a degree of effacement as the heroine cannot be clearly seen in the same manner as in daytime. This implies that through her night walks Sasha resists the panoptic control of her urban surroundings. As she walks nevertheless, Sasha perceives the houses around her as monstrous:

Walking in the night with the dark houses over you, like monsters. If you have money and friends, houses are just houses with steps and a front-door – friendly houses where the door opens and somebody meets you, smiling. If you are quite secure and your roots are well struck in, they know. They stand back respectfully, waiting for the poor devil without any friends and without any money. Then they step forward, the waiting houses, to frown and crush. No hospitable doors, no lit windows, just frowning darkness. Frowning and leering and sneering, the houses, one after another. Tall cubes of darkness, with two lighted eyes at the top to sneer. And they know who to frown at. They know as well as the policeman on the corner, and don't you worry ... (*Midnight* 23)

Houses in Gothic fiction have always been the locus for the uncanny (Vidler 17). Gothic houses have been studied in line with the psyche. The sense of confinement experienced within the house mirrors the psychological unrest of the individual in the interior of the house. In the 1930s and in the urban context specifically, houses continue to forge uncanny sensations within female city dwellers. The houses at the side of the streets like the café's space also take the position of the panopticon with their "Tall cubes of darkness, with two lighted eyes" acting as a monstrous supervisor that is ready to "frown and crush" those who are without any power. This scene can be studied in line with a similar scene from *Quartet*, as the following passage shows:

As she walked back to the hotel after her meal Marya would have the strange sensation that she was walking under water. The people passing were like the wavering reflections seen in water, the sound of water was in her ears [...]. Long shining empty streets and tall dark houses looking down at her. (*Quartet* 96)

The “tall dark houses looking down” at Marya are another indication of the hostility of the world outside the home. This hostility emerges as a reaction against the “visor effect” that Sasha and Marya stimulate when walking in darkness. It becomes remarkable throughout Rhys’s works that her women stroll in the city mostly in night time. The urban reflections that they get particularly stem from their night strolls. This makes it arguable that darkness provides them with some invisibility that might allow them to walk unnoticed unlike daytime. Anna in *Voyage in the Dark* (1934) for example, after losing her virginity, walks desperately through the streets and reflects: “but something about the darkness of the streets has a meaning” (*Voyage* 49). Feeling ashamed about herself, Anna finds meaning in darkness, implying that it metaphorically obscures her feeling of shame. Although the darkness of the streets seems to provide temporary freedom for women to glance at the urban spaces around them, the visions they get are often depicted as monstrous, hence, dangerous. The defensive position that the urban space of these houses displays suppresses their attempts at “self-effacement” (Elkin 62). Parsons points out about women’s place in the urban space that “although no longer exclusively a male domain, it is an urban landscape in which women are still dubiously respectable figures” (140).

Rhys’s female protagonists begin to act as living ghosts in the way that they become haunting entities through the temporary anonymity that the darkness of the streets offers. Such temporary invisibility can also be reached through walking in the fog, for it allows the woman to walk unnoticed. A good example of this occurs in *Mackenzie*. Travelling back to see her ailing mother in London, Julia:

walked on through the fog into Tottenham Court Road. The houses and the people passing were withdrawn, nebulous. There was only a grey fog shot with yellow lights, and its cold breath on her face, and the ghost of herself coming out of the fog to meet her.

The ghost was thin and eager. It wore a long, very tight check skirt, a short dark-blue coat, and a bunch of violets bought from the old man in Woburn Square. It drifted up to her and passed her in the fog. And she had the feeling that, like the old man, it looked at her coldly, without recognizing her. (*Mackenzie* 49)

This episode invites to comparison another scene of her walks in Paris that comes earlier in the novel:

It was seven o'clock and the café was beginning to fill up. Julia went into the street and turned in the direction of Boulevard Montparnasse.

The Boulevard St Michel was very crowded. Walking along blindly, Julia would bump every now and again into somebody coming in the opposite direction. When the people glared at her and muttered it seemed as if shadows were gesticulating. (*Mackenzie* 16)

Avoiding the street of Boulevard St Michel, is Julia's attempt to reach invisibility given that she has withdrawn from the café space as soon as it has become crowded. She fails to achieve invisibility despite her attempt because of the looks she receives from the people passing by as shadows. The foggy street, however, allows her to walk anonymously so that she is not even recognised by the man selling violets as well as by the ghost of herself emerging from the fog. The act of not being seen in this case suggests her transition to the realm of hauntology. This point has been noted by Carolina Palencia who goes as far as to suggest that the transition of Rhys heroines from ontology to hauntology can be Rhys's way of arguing that "our notions of human autonomy and individuality are illusions and that the boundaries of our identity are completely blurred" (201). It could also be possible to suggest that this transition to hauntology becomes a quest for it gives the female characters some degree of agency and power when walking in the city. Julia, after stopping at a tearoom, resumes her walk and as she passes by a cinema, she notices:

Vague-looking people hesitated for a moment, and then drifted in, to sit in the dark and see *Hot Stuff from Paris*. The girls were perky and pretty, but it was strange how many of the older women looked drab and hopeless, with timid, hunted expressions. They looked ashamed of themselves, as if they were begging the world in general not to notice that they were women or to hold it against them. (*Mackenzie* 50)

This passage represents women as “vague-looking” as though to beg for invisibility while they are at a public space such as the cinema. The cinema at that time was a popular form of amusement and the act of cinema going in the inter-war period was partly about “bodily display” (Stead 103). Rhys, on the other hand, draws attention to the group of women who rather yearn for invisibility in a place that was considered “a primary locus of women’s pleasure” (Frost 194). Whereas these women are offered this form of independence outside the home, this passage reveals they are haunted by the fear of being watched, therefore, wishing to be unnoticed by drifting in “to sit in the dark”, hence to be unseen. Beddoe comments that “for many women the cinema was no doubt just a form of entertainment but for many others it was the place where one escaped from the daily round of drudgery into the opulent and romantic world of fantasy” (117). As such, the cinema was considered as an escape for women from the hardships of their daily lives especially because it was “a cheap entertainment” (Beddoe 116). The hesitant stance of these women before they have drifted in shows their fear of being rejected by this space. The space of the cinema unlike the café, however, promises a sort of anonymity through its dark interior. Despite the crowd, these women choose to enter the cinema instead of escaping in the same way in which Julia has escaped the crowded café in the passage above.

A further insight to this quest of invisibility and, more precisely, the quest to descend to the world of hauntology occurs in a scene where Julia visits Mr Horsfield’s place, an English man that she has met in Paris and on whom she is financially dependent. In her

conversation with him, she recalls a memory about a woman artist for whom she used to pose. As she talks about the woman, she recalls a Modigliani picture in her studio. Julia recalls the haunting moment that she had felt as she looked at the picture⁵⁵:

And all the time I talked I was looking at a rum picture she had on the wall – a reproduction of a picture by a man called Modigliani. Have you ever heard of him? This picture is of a woman lying on a couch, a woman with a lovely, lovely body. Oh, utterly lovely. Anyhow, I thought so. A sort of proud body, like an utterly lovely proud animal. And a face like a mask, a long, dark face, and very big eyes. The eyes were blank, like a mask, but when you had looked at it a bit it was as if you were looking at a real woman, a live woman. A least, that's how it was with me (*Mackenzie* 40)

The way she describes the woman in the painting as “real” and “live” hints at the idea that Julia's status can be described as ghostly. In addition, despite her proud body, the woman's face looks like a mask. This means that she wishes to hide her face. The mask in this view could be interpreted as an armour that Julia wishes to possess. The mask in this case would protect her and would allow her to feel more alive and “real”. Julia reflects:

It was a beastly feeling I got – that I didn't quite believe myself, either. I thought: “After all, is this true? Did I ever do this?” I felt as if the woman in the picture were laughing at me and saying: “I am more real than you. But at the same time I *am* you. I'm all that matters of you.” (*Mackenzie* 41)

⁵⁵ Amedeo Modigliani is a Jewish Italian painter and he is famous for his portraits of nudes.

The woman in the picture comes to represent Julia's entrapment in the inter-war metropolis. Julia's perception of this woman as more real than herself reveals her liminal position in the way that she resonates with a living corpse in the visual world of the 1930s. The statement of "*I am you, I'm all that matters of you*" also suggests a shared entrapment. That is to say that Julia is trapped in the modern world in the same manner that this woman seems to be trapped in the picture. Added to this, the woman in the picture conjures a ghostly working in the way that she lurks in Julia's memories. Her memory of the image during her conversation with Mr Horsfield could be interpreted as Julia's wish for an ultimate escape that gives her power as to reside in a picture that would allow her to gaze beneath her mask-like face. Jeremy Hawthorn, in this respect, argues about the woman in the picture that "if there is a part of her that is the focus of male sexual attention, there is also a part of her that escapes the male gaze, that lives beyond the display directed at men" (72). This means that in spite of the seemingly trapped figure within the frame, the woman is enabled to evade the male gaze and it is such a position that Julia appears to desire. It can be interpreted then that Julia's memory about this picture is a product of her desire to be in her place within that picture frame that has the power to escape the male gaze. After her conversation with Mr Horsfield, Julia goes home. Once in her room, she reflects:

When I got home I pulled out all the photographs I had, and letters and things. And my marriage-book and my passport. And the papers about my baby who died and was buried in Hamburg. (*Mackenzie* 41)

But it had all gone, as if it had never been. And I was there, like a ghost. And then I was frightened, and yet I knew that if I could get to the end of what I was feeling it would be the truth about myself and about the world and about everything that one puzzles and pains about all the time. (*Mackenzie* 41)

This passage depicts an image of the condition of the woman after she is freed from the conventions of domesticity such as marriage and motherhood. Exemplified in the character of Julia, the woman comes to occupy a ghostly position in her hotel room. Lisa Kröger and Melanie Anderson argue that “the ghost does not have to be the specter of someone already dead: a ghost can be any person, living or dead, who figuratively haunts a culture or society in which they participate marginally” (xi). Indeed, through her marginality and liminal status, Julia functions as a living ghost who haunts both London and Paris.

In part two of the novel Julia returns to London to see her dying mother and her younger sister called Norah who live in poverty. Norah’s life in London is limited to staying at home and assisting her sick mother. Julia’s act of leaving her family to seek opportunities in Paris given that “jobs were not easy to find in London” (*Mackenzie* 60) reinforces the idea that she does not adhere to the norms of the inter-war period. While these two characters seem to be contrasted, Rhys shows that they both end up sharing a similar position (Davidson 224). Indeed, their shared experience lies in the fact that they are both marginalised in their societies. In this regard, Norah reflects: ““my life’s like death. It’s like being buried alive. It isn’t fair, it isn’t fair”” (*Mackenzie* 75) which implies that she lives in a transit moment between death and life. Likewise, Julia feels “like a ghost” in her hotel room, as can be seen in the passage above. This position, as Julia explains, is frightening to acknowledge because of the dangerous reality of her situation of poverty and alienation. The analogous status of the sisters as liminal ghostly figures shows further that the outside world of the inter-war period conveys an unfamiliar danger for poor middle-class women like Julia. Nevertheless, the degree of invisibility – apparent in her ghost like status – that Julia experiences in the hotel room seems to permit a temporary safety.

Van Lennep says that the individual is likely to experience a form of spatial existence within the hotel room, he states “The pronoun “my” in the expression “my room” does not

express my possession of it, but precisely a relation between me and the room, which means that my spatial existence has come about. We can experience this exceptionally well in the hotel room.” (212). Indeed, the hotel is another space that is located between public and private. It is in the hotel rooms or boarding houses where the Rhysian woman experiences some anonymity as well as sexual freedom. They are supposed, herein to be freed from the male gaze that saturates the public spaces. Van Lennep continues to explain that

In this room for which I do not bear any responsibility, in that it does not indicate my past or my future, in that I merely appear in it as a number in an arbitrary series, I suddenly become freed of my obligations and traditions. I find myself transformed through the anonymity of the hotel room (213)

Julia believes that her hotel room “was a good sort of place to hide in” (*Mackenzie* 9). Nevertheless, the safety that Rhys’s women feel in these rooms is not long lasting. Like the café and restaurant spaces, the hotel rooms contain traces of surveillance in them. Julia’s room for example has a monstrous aspect as it appears in the narrative: “it was large and high-ceilinged, but it had a sombre and one-eyed aspect because the solitary window was very much to one side.” (*Mackenzie* 7). The personification of the room as having “one eyed aspect” foreshadows a later episode where Julia goes back to Paris after her visit to London to see her sick mother. Her current hotel room is constantly watched by the women who live in the houses opposite to her hotel:

Her hotel looked out on a square in Île de la Cité, where the trees were formally shaped, much like the trees of a box of toys you can buy at Woolworth’s. The houses opposite had long row of windows, and it seemed to Julia that at each window a woman sat staring mournfully, like a prisoner, straight into her bedroom (*Mackenzie* 129)

This passage shows how the hotel room is something these women seem to desire. For Julia this transient space does not promise the freedom as much as it seems for these women prisoners:

As soon as she got out-of-doors she felt calmer and happier. She told herself that, of course, it was the room which depressed her because it so narrow, and because it was so horrible not to be able to open the window without having several pairs of eyes glued upon you. She thought: "We're like mites in a cheese in that damned hotel."
(*Mackenzie* 130).

If she opens the window, Julia will see a realistic image of what it is like to be imprisoned within the traditional setting of the house. Although she is in Paris, these women can be said to symbolise the imprisoning life of domesticity that many women had to return to in the 1930s England. Indeed, throughout Rhys's novels, there is a notable anxiety of domestic duties like marriage and motherhood. As such, most of her heroines either have lost a newborn child, like Sasha Jansen and Julia Martin, or have undergone an abortion like Anna Morgan in *Voyage in the Dark*. In addition, they are alone on the road, as most of them have been abandoned by their husbands or partners. This reveals the lonely exposure of the young women without home, as such, during this interim period between Victorian normality and modern freedom. It adds to their sense of themselves as outsiders. Emma Short, in line with this, argues that "the anonymous nature of the hotel space offers its inhabitants the opportunity to temporarily relinquish their everyday identities, and the societal restrictions placed upon them" (82). So, freed from their "obligations and traditions" of mothering as in *Midnight*, the unmarried woman faces new fears growing out of the unfamiliar danger of freedom. Seeing that Julia's room is menaced by "eyes glued upon [her]", Sasha's room conjures a different form of surveillance.

Sasha's experience of the hotel room is not different from Julia's. She is also granted a short-lived sense of invisibility when she enters her room away from the crowd of the public spaces:

Well, that was the end of me, the real end. Two-pound-ten every Tuesday and a room off the Gray's Inn Road. Saved, rescued and with my place to hide in—what more did I want? I crept in and hid. The lid of the coffin shut down with a bang. Now I no longer wish to be loved, beautiful, happy or successful. I want one thing and one thing only—to be left alone (*Midnight* 42)

Sasha in this passage compares her room to a coffin, implying that, like Julia, she resembles a corpse when she is in her room. What can be noticed from this passage is that Sasha withdraws from the world outside and embraces her ghostly position that she feels in the hotel room. Sasha uses her room as a space of protection that she says: “a room is a place where you hide from the wolves outside and that's all any room is. Why should I worry about changing my room?” (*Midnight* 28). The sense of protection anticipated here soon becomes penetrated by an outside surveillor. At the beginning of the novel and in returning to Paris, Sasha encounters a mysterious figure who occupies the room next to hers and whom she refers to as “the commis voyageur”. She describes him in ghostly terms: “the man who has the room next to mine is parading about in his white dressing gown. Hanging around. He is like the ghost of the landing. I am always running into him” (*Midnight* 14). The ghostly figure of the “commis voyageur” intrudes to the transitory space of the hotel room to suppress the sense of “anonymity” that Sasha longs to be transferred to. He tries to block her way when walking past him. Also, as she goes to her room slamming the door behind her thinking that she has finally avoided him, she hears him knock at the door:

I put my hand on his chest, push him backwards and bang the door. It's quite easy. It's like pushing a paper man, a ghost, something that doesn't it is like pushing a ghost, something that does not exist. And there I am in a dim room with the bed for madam and the bed for monsieur and the narrow streets outside (What they call an impasse), thinking of that white dressing gown... frightened as hell. A nightmare feeling..."

(*Midnight* 26)

Similar to the houses in the streets that take a monstrous aspect, the hotel room is haunted by such spectral figures that supervise hotel guests and especially to assure "the automatic functioning of power" (Foucault 201). That is to say that even their anonymity becomes threatened in the way that psychologically, the commis voyageur still haunts Sasha. In the words of Emma Zimmerman stating that "although on a physical level, Sasha is apparently the dominant force, psychologically, the commis instills fear and repulsion in her becoming the symbol for patriarchal power" (84). The ending of *Midnight* is ambiguous because of Sasha's last embrace of the commis voyageur: "then I put my arms round him and pull him down on to the bed, saying: 'Yes-yes-yes. . . .'" (158). This might lead to interpreting her act as accepting her dependency on men and thereby acknowledging the submissive nature she has been battling with throughout the novel. However, my point here goes in line with Graham Fraser's argument that Sasha's embrace of the commis means an embrace of spectrality and saying "yes" to him implies saying yes to be withdrawn into the spectral world (504). Because of her failure to assimilate with the new life in the public space, Sasha welcomes spectrality as an alternative space. This is particularly apparent in her uncertain status between death and life.

Julia's end is the other ambiguous because the writer shows that the character has gained some strength through the *flânerie* by the end of the novel, yet the episode of Julia's last encounter with Mr Mackenzie and her act of asking for money from him for the last

time might give an impression of pessimism. The ending shows a visual experience of women who have fewer job opportunities in comparison to when they have been younger, given that some of them have worked as chorus girls, or models. One way for them to acquire such authority is clothing. Clothing is a recurring point of interest in Rhys's works and also a device used by her female characters as a form of protection. Julia for example returns to Paris with the belief that "[she] will be able to manage better there" (*Mackenzie* 123), reaches for new clothing to help her walk in the city with less fear of people's eyes:

She began to imagine herself in a new black dress and a little black hat with a veil that just shadowed her eyes. After all, why give up hope when so many people had loved her? . . . "My darling . . . My lovely girl . . . *Mon amour*. . . *Mon petit amour*. . ."

But when the men who passed glanced at her, she looked away with a contracted face. Something in her was cringing and broken, but she would not acknowledge it.

In her mind she was repeating over and over again, like a charm: "I'll have a black dress and hat and very dark grey stockings." (*Mackenzie* 131)

Julia hopes that the black dress with the veil prompts some form of invisibility. As such these clothing items can be said to function as form of a "visor" for the female characters. As previously discussed, Derrida's returned apparition possesses a certain power that allows it to see without being seen; this is achieved through an armour. Seen in the passage above, "the hat with a veil that just shadowed her eyes" can function as an armour through which Julia is given a degree of agency as the veil shields her eyes and thus her face. Pierrette M. Frickey argues that Rhys's women are obsessed about clothes, "a fur coat, a nice black dress may change their lives. You're okay, the world says you're okay, if you've got a fur coat and a nice black dress. Who can touch you when you're armored in good

clothes?" (25). Indeed, by the late nineteenth century, Sennet points out that women had to pay serious attention to clothing in public spaces because it indicated their social class (68 qtd in Wolff 8). While it is not clearly indicated why Rhys's female characters pay much attention to their dress, what is apparent is that clothes such as the black dress and the fur coat, that are often repeated as essential items, permit a sense of agency for her female characters that allows them to stroll in the city unnoticed.

A same example can be retrieved from *Midnight*. Recalling an experience she has had when she used to work as a receptionist in a shop, Sasha reflects on the way she has retreated to the fitting-room to cry, after having been expelled by Mr Blank, the boss of the shop, she says

In this fitting-room there is a dress in one of the cupboards which has been worn a lot by the mannequins and is going to be sold off for four hundred francs. The sales woman has promised to keep it for me. I have tried it on; I have seen myself in it. It is a black dress with wide sleeves embroidered in vivid colours – red, green, blue, purple. It is my dress. If I had been wearing it I should never have stammered or been stupid. (*Midnight* 19-20)

Sasha believes that had she gotten back that black dress, she would not have been as vulnerable with her boss. The black dress would have given her the confidence to face the harassment of Mr Blank, who uses his power to fire her for committing the smallest error. Sasha then recalls another job she has had as a tour guide. She remembers an episode where she has been touring for a rich woman who could see her professional inadequacy that is apparent in her poor performance of guiding her as she could not remember the correct ways to certain places. Sasha comments:

But she saw through me. She only gave me twenty francs for a tip and I never got another job as a guide from the American Express. That was my first and last.

I try, but they always see through me. The passages will never lead anywhere, the doors will always be shut. I know....

Then I start thinking about the black dress, longing for it, madly, furiously. If I could get it everything would be different. Supposing I ask So-and-so to ask So-and-so to ask Madame Perron to keep it for me? ... I'll get the money. I'll get it.... (*Midnight* 22-23)

Sasha's failure to guide this American tourist indicates further the failings of female *flânerie* which per se curtails her current job and consequently her temporary financial source. The black dress functions as a visor for Sasha in this case. With this armour on, Sasha wishes to evade the state of being "seen through". The black dress, she believes will provide her with a partial shelter from the intrusive public gaze. Although not with the exact sense of armour that Derrida alludes to in his theory, the black dress in this passage acts as a shielding armour for Sasha. Derrida says about the visor:

We will call this the visor effect: we do not see who looks at us. Even though in his ghost the King looks like himself ("As thou art to thy selfe," says Horatio), that does not prevent him from looking without being seen: his apparition makes him appear still invisible beneath his armor ("Such was the very Armour he had on . . ."). (6)

"the visor effect" is attained, according to Derrida's reading of *Hamlet*, when the spectre has the authority to gaze at the subject without being itself seen. The subject is in a vulnerable position in this case because it cannot cross the spectre's looks. Sasha's statement of "she saw through me" expresses the idea that she is exposed to the public spectacle. Her desire of having the black dress at such vulnerable situation gestures towards

a desire to reach the register of spectrality that prevents her from being constantly seen through. This means that beneath the armour of the black dress, Sasha can generate a ghostly agency that might allow her to re-engage with her movements in the metropolis. If she could get the dress, “everything would be different”.

As seen throughout the novels that this chapter has looked at, Rhys’s heroines tend to achieve a certain degree of invisibility within the liminal spaces of the metropolis. This is applicable through retreating to the lavatories, walking in night-time or in the foggy weather, they can resist the panoptic control of the liminal spaces which focalize the male subject within them. Although it is not always successful to reach this invisibility, the small degrees that are attained prove to be threatening to the status quo of the surveillance of the male gendered urban spaces. They become threatening liminal figures that destabilise the established order of the city spaces whose streets are dominated by the male flaneur’s feet.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion: “We live in Gothic times”: Women’s Journey in the Castles of Modernity

Modernist women writers, as this thesis has explored, introduced a powerful mode of writing for literary Modernism. This thesis has shown how the Gothic moved from tangibility in the *fin de siècle* to intangibility in women’s writing of the 1910s to the 1930s. The Gothic here acts as a significant theory for women writers of this period. Indeed, the Gothic in the early twentieth century is no longer just about the crumbling edifices of abbeys and castles. It develops, as shown throughout the five chapters of my thesis, to become a fundamental strategy that articulates the unspeakable experiences of women across the periods that this study focuses on. Hence, lacking the Gothic ancient techniques, Modernist literature locates the Gothic in the haunted subjectivities of the modern world. The purpose of this chapter is to show the importance and the contribution of the Gothic to Modernist studies by women writers.

Crucial to our understanding of the relationship between Gothic and Modernism is to bear in mind that Modernism cannot be grasped in a cohesive way because of the absence of a single definition of the term as well as the peculiarity surrounding its periodization. Peter Childs for example points out that Modernism is “a contentious term and should not be discussed without a sense of the literary, historical and political debates which have accompanied its usage” (4). Michael Bell, also, acknowledges the difficulties that surround the definition of Modernism and attempts to periodize it between 1910 and 1925 (9). Other

scholars agree that Modernism began by the end of the nineteenth century and ended in the mid twentieth century ⁵⁶. In his attempt to define Modernism, Pericles Lewis asserts that:

In English the word refers primarily to the tendency of experimental literature of the early twentieth century to break away from traditional verse forms, narrative techniques, and generic conventions in order to seek new methods of representation appropriate to life in an urban, industrial, mass-oriented age. (xvii)

Despite the obscurity of the term, what seems to be agreed upon is the idea that literary Modernism came as a reaction against old sensibilities such as the ideologies of realism. Realism, the dominant feature in the fiction of the nineteenth century, is “characterised by its attempt to offer up a mirror to the world” (Childs 3). Modernism, on the other hand, focused on encouraging scientific experimentations that would challenge reality. Modernism, unlike realism that preserved things as they are, challenged all that blocked human progress and encouraged deep thinking of the individual. So, literary Modernism encourages the deeper thought of individual writers. Modernism subjectifies the individual even further than the omniscient narrators of nineteenth-century realism, by developing stream of consciousness narration to see experience through the psychology of the

⁵⁶ Childs notes that Modernism’s “literary roots have been said to be in the work of the the French poet and essayist Charles Baudelaire and the novelist Gustave Flaubert, in the Romantics, or in the 1890s *fin de siècle* writers; while its culmination or apogee arguably occurred before World War I, by which point radical experimentation had impacted on all the arts, or in 1922, the *annus mirabilis* of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, T.S.Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, Katherine Mansfield’s *The Garden Party*, and Virginia Woolf’s *Jacob’s Room*. Postwar dates for Modernism’s high-point make sense in terms of British literature but not European. Its end is variously defined, in terms of time, as 1930, 1950, or yet to happen” (14)

individual mind, this, of course, lends itself strongly to non-realist genres or tropes such as the Gothic. Moreover, Modernism encouraged the individual to explore the new sensibilities of his time exemplified in, for example, the complexities of industry, science and the urban life. Childs writes that Modernism

is associated with attempts to render human subjectivity in ways more real than realism: to represent consciousness, perception, emotion, meaning and the individual's relation to society through interior monologue, stream of consciousness, tunnelling, defamiliarisation, rhythm, irresolution... (Childs 3)

Modernism is mostly associated with representing the interior of the individual's subjectivity. It involves themes that centre around the search for a lost self or the questioning of one's identity. This means that in Modernist literature, the character's consciousness is the main site of action. Through the interior monologue and the stream of consciousness, the reader is allowed to have a realistic vision of the character's state of mind with all its complexities. Indeed, Childs adds that "Modernist writing 'plunges' the reader into a confusing and difficult mental landscape which cannot be immediately understood but which must be moved through and mapped in order to understand its limits and meanings" (60). An example of this can be found in West's *Soldier* that focuses on women's experience of the home front. Modernism's focus on the interior of the mind occurs in the narrator Jenny as she has repetitive dreams about her cousin Chris at the war front. She narrates: "By night I saw Chris running across the brown rottenness of No-Man's-Land, starting back here because he trod upon a hand, not even looking there because of the awfulness of an unburied head [...]. Well, such are the dreams of Englishwomen to-day" (*Soldier* 8). Although she had not had a physical experience of the war, her dream visions about dead men and wounded soldiers in the trenches help the reader

explore her psyche and allows Jenny to understand the harsh aspects of the war. In the Modernist period, insecurity and uncertainty appeared to replace the apparent stability of the previous century. The purpose of the Gothic in literary Modernism is to help women writers negotiate with their anxieties of place within the chaotic world of the early twentieth century. Despite the fact that women have gained some rights in the early twentieth century such as their access to higher education, entering professions and the right for women over thirty with property to vote in 1918 extended in 1928 to all women over twenty-one in full equality with men, women were still living in ambiguity and uncertainty. The Gothic, as such, is still in demand by women writers of Modernism, for it helps them to find answers to their current status. This means that whereas these educational and career accomplishments seem to be promising, women's present conditions reveal that these gains are temporary. Hence, instability, uncertainty and often fear are the dominant mood of Modernist writings by women from the 1890s to the 1930s and the Gothic is conjured to channel these insecurities.

A central theme of Modernism as far as the content is related is the focus on aspects of disillusionment and despair. Lewis points out that "The attempt to register the uncertainty and even haziness of the subjective experience of events remained a central concern of modernist fiction, influential throughout the history of modernism" (61). This is indeed crucial to the thematic concerns of Modernist writers. Woolf and Sinclair for example draw upon the subjective experience of their female characters that reflect the case of many women during and after the event of the Great War. The despair and terror that these women endured at the home front for example was a central focus for the Modernist woman writer. This feminine experience of the war demands a new form of representation. That is to say the Gothic of Modernism is born from women writers' necessity to articulate women's hidden desires as well as their silent horrors in a literary period which was

dominated by male writers. Seen in this light, this chapter also argues that Modernism broadened its scope to allow Gothic tropes where High Modernism had dismissed these as something unworthy. Further to this, High Modernism is a phase which is used to categorize the peak of literary Modernism's experimentation. David Perkins links Modernism to specific literary techniques and it is particularly attributed to poets such as T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Williams Carlos Williams whose own views on literature corroborated and supported such a definition. Perkins also limits High Modernism to the 1920s, which he regards as "the historical apogee of the Modernist period" (qtd in Joshua Kavaloski 204). High Modernism, according to Perkins, covers a varying range of its aesthetics between the 1890s and the 1920s (Kavaloski 204).

The women writers that this thesis looks at tell us a story of women's journey in relation to the historical, national and cultural change from the *fin de siècle* to the end of the inter-war period. Throughout the five chapters of this thesis, it becomes remarkable that there is an emerging thread of women's continuous struggles conveyed to the reader through a Gothic register that the dominant and largely patriarchal Modernism of the period attempted to ignore. It is surprising, in a sense, that High Modernism should ignore a genre of disturbance like Gothic in its expression of interior breakdown and societal horror of the period of the First World War and its aftermath. Is it possible that women, in particular, less active in the midst of such horror, are more receptive to it imaginatively that Modernism invited the internal and drew out the supernatural and the Gothic in women, particularly. Because "what is concealed is very much alive and present" (Gordon xv), the Gothic keeps recurring as a writing mode and a handy device for these writers to account for the anxieties and the ambivalence that women experienced from the 1890s to the 1930s. This ambivalence originates from their encounter with an unfamiliar and a dangerous freedom that women had temporarily tasted as a result of having to replay the traditional

role of a spiritual mothering during and after the war. The latter led them to sacrifice their power in order to rescue the wounded manhood of their menfolk.

The significance of my thesis research lies in filling the gap in the field of Gothic Modernism by establishing the women writers' voice within it. In fact, Women writers' contribution to Gothic Modernism is twofold. Women writers contribute to Gothic studies in that, as I have argued, they revive the Gothic genre that was in decline in the early twentieth century. Focusing on elements of the ghostly and haunting, these writers underline a haunting experience specific to the female character's point of view. As such, this thesis has argued that the Gothic remains an essential device of literary Modernism in spite of the transformation it has undergone across the periods, evidencing further the characteristic of Gothic as a plastic mode. To explain further, the Gothic plasticity performs itself in the way that it shifts from the haunted castles of older forms of Gothic, to speak in its modern form of the ghosts and phantoms of the mind. Women writers in my study show the stages of Gothic transformation, which at the same time functions as a medium to reflect on the complexity of their position.

This thesis also contributes to Modernist Studies in the way that it allows Modernism to expand its dimensions and include the Gothic. The possibility of the expansion of literary Modernism has been addressed by some scholars who have defined this as the New Modernist movement. Advocates of the New Modernist studies call for an expansion of the field from the strict movement of High Modernism. The first study that initiated this movement has been launched by Douglas Mao and Rebecca L. Walkowitz. In their article "The New Modernist Studies" (2008), these authors tend to encourage the expansion of modernist studies vertically by reconsidering popular forms of literature like low and middlebrow literature which have been previously rejected by High Modernism. Also, spatially, by thinking beyond the realm of Western culture to include other cultures

from all around the world. Considering the recognizable significance of the Gothic to Modernism that this thesis has argued, it becomes clear that women writers contribute by enlarging this movement of New Modernism bringing back into play significantly an important device that has been initially ignored by the literary movement of Modernism. In doing so, women writers sustain a continuity and a link between the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century psyche in ways previously denied by the more patriarchal High Modernism that defined its art as a rejection of or break away from Victorian society and culture.

David Punter raises the question in regard to the relationship between Gothic and Modernism as follows:

As we move into the twentieth century, we encounter, as we might expect, further fragmentation. Where might we – to take a particularly intriguing example – locate the “Gothic moment” in modernism? Or might we prefer to see in modernism precisely that movement of the mind that seeks to exorcise the ghost, to clean out the house, ruined though it may be, and assert the possibility of a life that is not haunted as it situates itself resolutely in a present that strains towards the future? (2)

Punter’s question of where to locate the “Gothic moment” in Modernism raises a complexity in regard to the relationship between Gothic and Modernism. This is further apparent in the way that he suggests that we look at Modernism as that movement that tends to cleanse itself from any traces of Gothic presence, focusing on a future sterilised from Gothic traces. Modernism, as it departs from Victorian realism, is expected to find new ways of expression. As part of its literary experimentation, Modernism gives more focus to the workings of the mind. The abandoned castles, ghouls and the buckets of blood, to name only a few traditional ingredients of the Gothic, seem to oppose Modernism’s project of sterilization of the present from the past. The female authors that this thesis focuses on

reveal the way in which Modernism reworks Gothic conventions to conform to the anxieties of its age as they affect women. This seemingly fragmented sense of the Gothic resonates with the instability of the psychology of the individual in the Modernist period. As far as gender is concerned, Light points out that the woman's identity in the Modernist period is fluid and that it "is potentially unstable, always in danger of being uprooted and of needing to be rehoused" (188). Given the instability of women's position from the 1890s to the 1930s, their identity, seems to be, indeed, under a continuous threat even as it offers unprecedented freedoms. The appeal of the Gothic here to female authors and readers alike can be discerned in its idiom of hauntings and the terror that emanates from this phenomenon. These women writers show the Gothic's resistance to the High Modernism's project of sterilising itself from its traces because "anything Gothic was [...] discarded as an idle waste of time" (Botting 6). As they do so, women writers renovate Modernism by exorcising the Gothic from its old birthplace and transforming it into a useful tool for the new aesthetics of Modernism. Lewis says that "modernism resulted from the challenge of representing new content" (2). Women writers, as such, equally, represent a new host to which Modernism might become subordinate.

The Gothic in Modernism, as this thesis has shown, rises from its tombs where it has been buried in the mid-nineteenth century to settle within the unconscious of the individual. This is particularly seen in the haunted women characters like those we find in Du Maurier's fiction discussed. This also includes some male characters as shown in the haunted masculinities of Lee and Nesbit and also in the male characters of Woolf and West who return from the war to live like ghosts of themselves. The Gothic also finds roots in Modernist texts through its metaphoric discourses such as the vampirism exhibited in Sinclair's *Romantic* or the monstrosity as depicted in the monstrous urban space encountered in novels like Rhys's *Midnight*. Given the plasticity of the Gothic mode, the

psychological element of Gothic is the most apparent in Modernist literature. Indeed, Punter argues in this light that

Gothic speaks of phantoms: the neo-psychoanalytic ideas of Abraham and Torok, following Freud, are based on a redescription of the phantom. Gothic takes place – very frequently – in crypts: Abraham and Torok, again, make the crypt the cornerstone of their psychic topography. The Gothic speaks of – indeed, we might say it attempts to invoke – specters: Derrida, in, for example, *Specters of Marx*, chooses the same post-Marxist rhetoric to talk about what we might term the “suppressed of Europe.” (2)

My thesis indeed shows this growing relationship between the Gothic and psychoanalysis. Punter’s reference to psychoanalytical theories to redefine the Gothic of the early twentieth century highlights further this emergent mode of the psychological Gothic. The Gothic, indeed, reappears through crypts within the female psyche as seen in the analysis of du Maurier’s *Rebecca*, for instance. The female character becomes haunted by something other to her subject. The ghost in this sense forms a tomb within her unconsciousness and settles there without her knowing. In broader terms, the crypt within the unconscious is a ghost’s shelter in Gothic Modernism. Punter’s reference to Derrida also reminds us of women characters who descend to the world of hauntology in the dreadful life of the city spaces in an urban context as seen in my chapter on Rhys. Hauntology is the phenomenon of replacing a state of materiality or tangibility with a ghost that is situated in a state of liminality between life and death. This is indeed what Rhys’s characters have experienced in the urban life of Modernity. This reminds us of Lewis’s point where, in his definition of Modernism, states that the Modernist movement represents “new methods appropriate to life in an urban, industrial, mass-oriented age” (xvii). It is arguable that the Gothic device

of hauntology is a part of Modernism's new methods of representing women's status in an urban context of the inter-war period. In addition, the Gothic also

has to do with the uncanny: the uncanny has now come to form one of the major sites on which reinvestigations of the mind, from both the psychoanalytic and also the neuropsychological points of view, can take place. And Gothic speaks, incessantly, of bodily harm and the wound: the wound signifies trauma, and recent years have seen a veritable explosion in studies of trauma at individual, communal and global levels, an orientation which, we can only suppose in the light of recent conflicts and their terrible human consequences, will only become more urgent. (Punter 2-3)

Indeed, the Gothic in women's Modernism speaks of the uncanny world that the traumatised returned soldiers of World War One inhabit. As my chapter on Woolf and West has argued, the Gothic enables these writers to draw upon the incommunicable experience of the war as lived by both men and women. The Gothic also speaks of wounds as seen in Sinclair's *Romantic* in chapter three of this thesis. It depicts, first, the dehumanizing nature of the war and the man's terror of effeminacy at the sight of wounds, and, second, it highlights women's status as they are equally affected by the degrading position of their men. Besides, Gothic Modernism by women writers also exposes women's status in the inter-war period metropolis in the liminal position of a living ghost, a position which becomes a way of coping with and expressing the threatening panopticism of the urban life as examined in Rhys's chapter. The unfamiliar setting of the metropolis leads Rhys's women to live an experience akin to the traditional plot of the eighteenth-century Gothic in that the setting of the Gothic castle pictured in Radcliffe's *Udolpho* and Lewis's *The Monk*, for instance, foreshadows the claustrophobic cityscapes that are epitomised in Rhys's works under study.

Since its birth in the eighteenth-century narrative, the Gothic continues to channel similar concerns in the following centuries in different shapes. The idea here is that the Gothic remains a static mode of writing in twentieth-century literature despite its transformation across the periods. This is to say women in Modernist narratives tend to exhibit a similar experience to women characters found, for example, in Radcliffe's Romances. This means that heroines of eighteenth-century Gothic fiction experience similar degrees of horror while traversing the Radcliffian vaults of a haunted castle as modern women who traverse the haunted thresholds of Modernity as can be seen in Rhys's narratives.

The mysterious passages of the gloomy castles of earlier Gothic fiction connect to the haunting streets of the twentieth-century city. For example, in *Udolpho*, as Emily walks through the secret passages of the castle "This brought to her recollection the veiled picture which had attracted her curiosity on the preceding night, and she resolved to examine it. As she passed through the chambers that led to this, she found herself somewhat agitated" (*Udolpho* 229). This reflects similar instances of agitation within the female characters of Rhys as they traverse the streets of the modern city. This is made clear in an example from *Quartet* when Marya becomes financially subordinate to Mr Heidler who promises to look after her at the expense of her becoming his mistress. Hopeless, she walks through the streets of Paris, and has "remembered her tears and her submissions and the long hours she had spent walking between two rows of street lamps, solitary, possessed by pity as by a devil" (*Quartet* 59). As these heroines traverse the passages of the castle and the streets of Paris, they are both aroused by dreadful reminders. Marya, here, is visited by painful sketches about her solitary life and the harsh realities of having to survive at the expense of being dependent on a man. This is to say that urban streets are a space of terror for the modern woman of the early twentieth century. It represents the wilderness of the solitary

life that poor women like Marya are subject to. Another example of the haunting streets can be found in her novel *Voyage in the Dark*. On the train to London with her aunt Hester, Anna writes about her first impressions of London:

This is London – hundreds thousands of white people white people rushing along and the dark houses all alike frowning down one after the other all alike all stuck together- the streets like smooth shut-in ravines and the dark houses frowning down-oh I’m not going to like this place I’m not going to like this place I’m not going to like this place – you’ll get used to it Hester kept saying I expect you feel like a fish out of water but you’ll soon get used to it ...(Voyage 16)

The inter-war period’s streets evoke Gothic resonances present in the sense of inhospitality that the dark streets and the houses that frown down depict, conjuring episodes of haunting and terror to Anna Morgan of *Voyage*. The Gothic still lives in Modernist texts and the parallel between its traditional elements and Modernist ones evidence this point. This implies that the Gothic transforms, but it never disappears. It, instead, keeps returning as a powerful ground for Modernist women writers to articulate differing concerns about their conflicting status.

The classical motif of the haunted castle no longer stimulate fear in the modern reader because it is clichéd (Botting 3). Instead, the haunted subjectivity appears to be more appealing to the contemporary female reader for it resonates with her day to day anxieties. The Gothic, as this thesis argues, is still much alive within the texts of women writers who recognise its relevance and influence on Modernism. It is revived, specifically, through its elements of the ghost and haunting. Briggs states that “The most characteristic form taken by the Gothic from, perhaps, 1830 to 1930 is the ghost story” (177). This is partly true because the emergent element of the Gothic in the *fin de siècle* is the ghost story, as seen in the first chapter on Lee and Nesbit. Their short stories anticipate a form of a

psychological Gothic that becomes essential to later women writers to adopt, particularly during the upheaval of the Great War. Although not ghost stories, Modernist texts by Sinclair, Woolf, West, du Maurier and Rhys develop a Gothic mode inherent in the haunted subjectivities of the Modernist period. Simon Hay points out in his study of the ghost story that:

As a genre, modern ghost stories are concerned with historical trauma, its remembrance and its lingering consequences. In these stories, the ghost is something that returns from the past, something that irrupts into the present, disrupting both the present's presumed separateness from the past, as well as its stable inheritance of that past. (227)

As the previous chapters have argued, these women writers acknowledge a continuity of a Gothic language that grows out of the need to address “the dark side of Modernity” (Riquelme 3) from women's perspective. In doing so, this thesis has focused on female characters' experience of the pre-war's rising concerns over the future of the nation that placed a focus on strengthening the notion of the home that was crumbling. Also, the consequent anxieties originating from the outbreak of the First World War placed a responsibility upon women to restore the pre-war confidence of English masculinity. Women had to face unfamiliar horrors symptomatic of the fear of leadership during the absence of men either at the Western Front like Sinclair's female character Charlotte in *The Romantic* or the home front like Woolf and West's female characters who found themselves haunted by a legacy of the past in a time they were supposed to move forward.

As this thesis has shown, the efforts of the *fin de siècle* New Woman at empowerment are dispelled by her older sister in the early twentieth century. This implies that part of the modern woman's complex position in Modernism is a self haunted by her

ancestors. Of course, this coincides interestingly with the cultural and historical transition in this time of turbulence. Marshall Berman describes modernity as a world

Of agitation and turbulence, psychic dizziness and drunkenness, expansion of experiential possibilities and destruction of moral boundaries and personal bonds, self-enlargement and self-derangement, phantoms in the street and in the soul – is the atmosphere in which modern sensibility is born. (18).

The phantoms that appear in the women's Modernist narrative appear to be necessary because the present, as Hay argues, "cannot exist on its own, as a separate point in time uninformed by past and future: it is transient, in process, so always saturated with the sounds and sights of memory and expectation" (41). What is known to be dangerous in early Gothic narratives is now a necessary tool for the female characters to come to terms with their positions and identities. These women receive the ghost figure with fear and terror at the beginning of their haunting experience only to embrace it by the end.

The complexity of women's position evokes a sense of fear and ambivalence that only a Gothic language can account for. The struggle that Sinclair's female characters undergo in what concerns the notion of motherhood and marriage as occurs in her *Uncanny Stories* culminates in the war narratives of Woolf and West in the sense that the subject matter of the war confines them further, paradoxically, within the world of domesticity. The fear they experience is symptomatic of the act of haunting by their ancestors who metaphorically return in the form of the Angel in the House. The latter appears to stage a necessary return that highlights women's war contribution through their act of rescuing the wounded masculinities from within and outside the home space. The home space delineates further horrors for du Maurier's female characters who symbolise the uncertainty of women's required return to domesticity in the 1930s. Jean Rhys depicts the status of women

as living ghosts, presenting such status as an outlet that permits traversing the thresholds of city spaces unnoticed.

The point at which the female journey this thesis examines comes to its end at the eve of the Second World War might not be an optimistic one. My closing chapter on Rhys seems less a triumph of women's liberation and mobility than a regression to the trials and horrors of Otranto. Rhys presents a bleak ending for her female characters in the way in which they end up as liminal figures who turn to invisibility as a way of existence. Esther Peeren points out that:

In their new spectral guise, certain features of ghosts and haunting—such as their liminal position between visibility and invisibility, life and death, materiality and immateriality, and their association with powerful affects like fear and obsession—quickly came to be employed across the humanities and social sciences to theorize a variety of social, ethical, and political questions. (2)

As such, the ghost figure is the most operative Gothic device in Modernism through which women writers theorise women's uncertainty and the fear of the unknown that dominate their narratives. The figure manifests itself through either inhabiting the female unconsciousness or acting as a metaphorical tool to account for the liminal status of women.

Because each research functions under a certain set of boundaries, my thesis had certain limitations. What this research does not do but opens the scope for others to do is to explore Gothic evolution as it moves between historical contexts of different nations in non-British fiction by women writers. This might include Katherine Mansfield, Elizabeth Bowen, Mary Borden. Bowen and Borden, for instance, wrote war fictions that have Gothic manifestations in them. In addition, studies on Mansfield and Bowen often explore aspects

of the Colonial Gothic. These studies relied on postcolonial and historical theories to address Gothic's manifestations in their writings that often addresses national concerns. It is also important to examine the female characters' uncertain position as well as complex identities that are affected by historical events from a psychological perspective. Borden is an American writer. Her famous war collection of essays under the title of *The Forbidden Zone* (1929) also delineates the writer's engagement with the subject matter of the First World War and the female nurses handling of its casualties. Whereas this collection is far from being labelled as Gothic, Terry Phillips in her article "The Discourse of the Vampire in First World War Writing" makes a reference to this work where she accuses Borden's female nurses of punishing the dead through preventing their death and leaving them entrapped between life and death. Phillips connects female nurses to the vampire figure because the latter's crime is preventing the victim's withdrawal to death (74). Further insights could be added to Phillips's point about the stance of the female nurses when encountering the wounded from a psychological aspect.

What this thesis aimed to argue is that the Modernist movement becomes expansionist and inclusive of techniques that were initially ignored such as the Gothic. Indeed, the Gothic per se turns to act as an essential technique for Modernism. The Gothic has been treated as a form of escapist fiction by some critics. Elizabeth Napier, for example, argues that "the reading of Gothic fiction is purely an escapist enterprise; that relevance to 'real' life is tangential and that direct connections are few" (67). This indicates that Gothic fictions create an escapist world to which the reader withdraws in attempt to escape from the morbid realities outside. On the other hand, Susanne Becker states that 'Escapism' is about recognizing the constraints of cultural ideologies rather than just avoiding them (34). My thesis has argued that women writers of the early twentieth century adopt this Gothic language to negotiate with and chronicle their anxieties instead of

escaping them. These anxieties often stem from the presence of a ghostly entity within them. Punter argues that “the ghost has symbolisms of a world within us” (185). Indeed, the ghost in Modernist writings by women symbolises those female minds haunted by the immediate horror of the modern world as strongly as it recalls them to the haunting past and its gendered historical legacies.

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